PZ
3
.T9694
Wi

FT MEADE
GenColl

WITHOUT THE CITY

CHARLES C. FULTON

Class PZ3
Book .F9694
Copyright No. Wi.

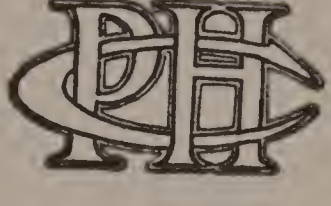
COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

Without the City

WITHOUT THE CITY

BY

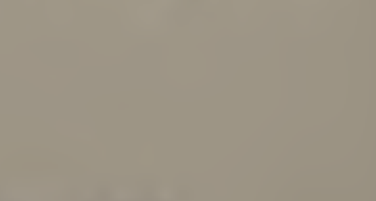
CHARLES C. FULTON



The Christopher Publishing House
Boston, U. S. A.

PZ3
.F9694
Wi

COPYRIGHT 1924
BY THE CHRISTOPHER PUBLISHING HOUSE



MADE IN AMERICA

APR -9 '24

©C1A777868

DEDICATED

To the Inhabitants of the City

INVOCATION

Forever reigning on Earth and Above,
Together with Labor and Heavenly love,
Come and inspire with your marvelous grace—
Truth be my helper; show thy wonderful face.

Come and allow all thy sisters above,
Beauty and labor and aerial love,
Light ye around me: for graces ye are!
Hear me; I worship thee—take up my car.

Bear me to realms yet unwritten by men.
Wonders abound there untouched yet by pen.
Wonders undreamed of by poets or seers;
Take me away from this valley of tears.

Heights so sublime that the body is lost;
Glory on glory in spirit-fire tossed,
Heaven on heaven and span upon span,
Far from this grubbing—and dissolute man.

Hear me, I pray thee; let grief come in vain,
Sorrow and sin and the murderous pain.
Grant me the cry I so plaintively send;
Patiently hear ye my plea to the end.

—*C. C. Fulton.*

Chapter I.

THE BEGINNING OF IT ALL

One night, not long ago, I fell into a deep slumber which was more than a nightly rest. For eternities I seemed to be hovering in space like an eagle; to be suspended between heaven and earth. I seemed to be almost without substance; to be as light as air. Then, slowly at first; afterwards with great speed, I felt myself ascending.

Soon, far—far away, a little light appeared. At first it was the size of a tiny star; but it gradually increased in brilliancy until its splendor became blinding. Then the overpowering radiance burst upon my startled vision, and I found myself in a large room.

This room was of such collossal dimensions, that I shall not even venture to guess its measurements. I was standing, it appeared to me, in the centre of the floor; and all around me, but far distant, were the gigantic walls. It seemed as though the room were circular in shape, with a great dome-shaped roof. In the centre of the roof blazed the great light which I had observed so far away. Vast, vari-colored pillars supported the roof. The floor was smooth and was composed of a substance as clear as crystal. How I ever passed through puzzled and still puzzles me; for it was very hard.

Whilst I was looking and wondering thus, a voice said: "Look not down, but raise your eyes to things above."

I turned, surprised at hearing this, for a moment before I had been alone. I beheld a young man. He had even features and an open countenance. His hair was brown, as were his eyes; and his figure was lithe and symmetrical. He was dressed in a loose, flowing robe of the purest

white; which was fastened at his shoulder by a golden star.

Noticing my scrutiny, he smiled; and said to me: "Dearly beloved, you were summoned in the spirit for a purpose. The purpose is this: mankind is struggling, or a good proportion are struggling, at this hour, to obtain the truth of a future life. Some are injuring body, mind and soul in endless, and almost fruitless endeavors to learn more. In some, this is idle curiosity; but the better part desire comfort. To them, a word of comfort —a word of encouragement, is surely needed. We, who labor so staunchly here, are sorely smitten by such waves of futile experiments. The results are so small and so tainted by the flesh! This world can never be reached by physical means, or connection would have been made long ago. The best a human can ever get, is but the reflection. A greater wave of frenzy always surges, when men have stirred up some terrible calamity, the product of their own sin and indifference, such as has just passed."

"Once in every hundred years, some living human being is allowed to visit this world; many have passed through. Most have forgotten the trip in the transition between sleeping and waking; some have died on the journey because of disobedience; some retained the beauty, but none of the facts, and became poets or painters; while some—went mad. But one remembered scraps of the visit, which he put in a great poem; that man was Dante."

"So you can see the dangers of this trip; you may die, become mad, or be a poet. These are terrible things to consider, in the eyes of the world. Yet, my Masters, loath to forever bar man alive from the City, give this privilege. You are called here to view this life; when you return, if you remember the trip, write it down and put it before men. The privilege is great and the wrath for failure is also great. You are privileged, however, to withdraw now. Another will be substituted, for there are thousands who would be eager to go—and you may return and forget."

"I cannot but accept such an opportunity, despite the dangers;" I answered, "But why was I choosen in preference to any of the others? I know nothing of theology nor any of those dense subjects and cannot give a wordy exposition."

Smilingly, he replied: "That is rather a virtue. But the selection was mainly done by chance. A messenger was dispatched to earth with instructions. He sped in a straight line from this place and landed near where you were at the time. After a short search and consideration, he selected you as the fortunate person. The rest you know."

"I will surely go;" I said, "For it is not only a duty I must perform but a glorious pleasure. Lead on."

"Good!" he exclaimed, "You have chosen wisely. You will now visit the first four mansions in the Father's house. The first, is the mansion of retribution, where the faults are redeemed. These faults are sins when they violate the commandments which have been taught by the great spiritual leaders of all times. From these faults come sin and crime; and from them come all the sorrows of the world, for their violation is the root of all evil. If men would only believe and act upon that truth! But are there any questions before we start?"

"Yes, two;" I replied, "One is vital, the other is not. This is the first: Was Christ the son of God, as we have always believed? Was he divine?"

"He was divine in that he lived a divine life and taught man those fundamental principles of right living; which, if followed, would make the earth a Heaven instead of a Hell. He was a son of God, inasmuch as he combined all the attributes of God in himself, that it is possible for a man to have. He was a perfect man. We love him, because he gave the planes to mankind and mankind should love him, also."

"But in the sense you mean, that of direct physical descent, he was but a mortal. He was a man. He was not conceived by the Holy Ghost any more than any other

mortal is conceived. His soul came from the All-Highest; but his body came from the dust, to which it returned."

"Alas that man should require an idol as the object of his prayers! Every other religion has its idols, whether visible or invisible. Alas that the religion of Jesus, he who hated idols, should have so changed! For personal worship really means the descent of the mind from the pure, simple teachings of the founder. From there, it is but one step to the dead and musty rituals, from which ressurection is impossible. Rituals and relics; both are abhorrent!"

"I understand;" I replied. "The second question is: Do all in this place dress as you dress?"

"No," he replied; "I am a teacher. There are four grades of teachers, all being distinguished by the star at the shoulder of their garment. The souls are clothed in the virtue they possess. Of the details in regard to their garments, you will be better informed later. The teachers, too are dressed as is best suitable to their station and work."

"Tell me more about the teachers;" I said.

"As I before remarked, there are four grades of teachers;" he replied; "The lowest grade, work upon the first plane; they wear a red star upon their shoulder, and teach the folly of sin. They have the hardest work of all; for such work is a tax upon their spiritual strength and endurance. Hence, we assign the most zealous and hardy students who pass through the planes, that work."

"The teachers who work upon the second plane, wear a silver star. They teach obedience to the great natural laws, which are the moral laws. The teachers of the third plane wear a golden star, such as I wear. We instruct the souls as to the make-up of the Universe. The teachers on the fourth plane are the highest and wear a star which emits light. They, also, are termed disciples. All the teachers are greatly respected who care for that branch of labor and have high rank in the City."

"All this, and much more, was created and devised

under the inspiration of the Most High, by his believers —the great leaders throughout the ages. Thanks to Him and them—man is saved to enjoy the fulfilment as the great Jesus said to his followers:
'In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you.'

The Most High is everyone's Father; and He cares for everyone, great and small. If one does wrong, the punishment follows as sure as light is not darkness. If one does good, the reward follows, as sure as the soul lives."

"Glory to the all-merciful love and wisdom!" I exclaimed, "That gives *real* justice to everyone. But I cannot believe that I am not dreaming. Give me some sign that will still any doubts remaining in my mind. I feel that you are good and mean good; I cannot believe otherwise. These things are so like the things I have hoped for and prayed for, that I am confused."

He frowned slightly and replied: "O doubter; doubter, like your whole human family of doubters! Born in doubt, you live in doubt and die doubting! Oh, my masters! Send some sign, I pray you, that will kill his doubts!"

We waited awhile, a very short while. Slowly, a picture appeared before me. It was my room. There I lay upon my bed, apparently dead. Then a voice spoke and said: "Your body lies there; if you were dreaming, you could never see it thus. It may be that you will again inhabit it and remember this trip. If such happens, write what you see and give it to the world."

Slowly, as the picture faded, the voice ceased. I fell upon my knees, and cried: "I believe! And pray that my weakness be forgiven. Lead on; lead on and I will follow!"

" 'Tis good," said he, "You are forgiven. Come with me."

Then, smiling, he grasped my hand; and we slowly

arose from the floor of the great room. As we arose, the blazing star increasing in brilliancy, until its radiance became overpowering. It seemed to descend to meet us; then for a moment enveloped us completely and dropped past like a veil.

Chapter II.

THE FIRST PLANE

After we had passed through the globe of light, which did not burn us and was not even hot, I found myself in a large room or enclosure. It was circular in shape and was open to the air above. The sky was of a ruddy color and all was enveloped in a ruddy glow.

I saw hundreds of souls—nay, thousands; scattered about the room; some were standing, some sitting and some lying upon the floor. Both men and women were there, mixed in regardless confusion. I was surprised to see such mixing of the sexes in a place where some carnal persons must be present. My guide said, however, that all were as senseless as logs of wood. In fact, not one showed any intelligence, or gave any sign that they realized their position.

Every nation and race were represented; and each one was clad in the costume in which they had lived. They looked so pitiful; poor puppets of fate! Few of them ever knew themselves and fewer still ever knew more. Few ever saw the ideals and dreams of their youth fulfilled and fewer still ever saw those of their children!

Many were entering by a broad door at one end of the room. Incessantly, I heard a low voice resounding through the room, uttering names. At the sound, souls moved in answer, toward the door in the stiff, mechanical gait of the somnambulist. As each soul passed through the narrow door at the opposite end from the broad door, his or her garments dropped away; leaving the soul clad in the virtue alone. As the clothing dropped, they melted in the atmosphere; thus severing another link to the earth.

As the soul passes through this entrance, the first step in the journey to the City, conciousness returns; but only the *mind* becomes cognizant of the surroundings. The body moves, not under its command, but by a superior will. What must be the thoughts that pass through the mind at this stage! Confusion; and perhaps fear, must be present. Perhaps some think they have returned to life; and they are right. Some may think they are in Heaven; they also are right. While some may imagine they are in Hell; they too would be correct.

We passed through the great door and entered another chamber. As we did so, we faced a large, ebony chair, upon which rested a small cloud. A voice spoke out of the cloud, and said to me: "A rare favor has been conferred upon you; not because *you* are so worthy of its reception, but because *others,* more righteous, are anxious to hear of the favor. Mind you, relate all you see upon this plane; let nothing be hidden that is vital. Nothing should be concealed from man."

He continued: "In this plane are six main divisions, namely: for hard-heartedness, intolerance, passion, avarice, faint-heartedness and skepticism. There are several portions to each division, containing varieties or developments of the same sin. And as a last word to you, and see that you remember it—violate none of those great moral laws while here; for if you do, you will surely be held for punishment. Now go and view the correction of these sins. Reflect on the mercy of the All-Highest and bless His works."

Upon receiving this dismissal, my guide and I passed from before the great chair. Yet I could not help turning to view the fates of the souls. As each came through the great door and paused before the chair, I could see each face. The mind was alert and active, but only the eyes showed life. As each passed before the great chair, the sentence was given; and each

soul received that for which it had labored during life. The servant is surely worthy of his hire.

What must be the thoughts of the soul when he hears the sentence: "Thou art full of sin; go to retribution and be cleansed!" What is the retribution? Am I going to a fiery Hell? What is in store for me? Can I escape? Or is this but an awful dream? And if not, how did I get here?

It is not long before all is answered. When the soul awakens from the sleep which we call death, memory and understanding return; as it does when we awaken from the lesser of the two sleeps. There is little time lost between the time of awakening and the beginning of retribution. But what a time of uncertainty it must be! The joy of renewed consciousness is completely swallowed by awful fear.

Soul after soul passed through the door and received the sentence in words of awful portent. Soon my companion turned and led the way across the room to the first door. The door was to the division for the hard-hearted.

The door was black. Black hardly described the degree of profound darkness which was its color. No word spoken by the tongue of man could describe it rightly, for it *radiated* darkness.

My companion turned to me and said: "All souls came into physical existence free from sin. If man did not know the difference between right and wrong, he would undoubtedly do only that which would please or profit him. But he *has* a preception of right and wrong; fostered and developed by centuries of social life and study. Some of his ideas are false; we do not blame him for that, for we were men once ourselves. We know the human mind is not flawless and we know that intelligence has developed under stupendous difficulties. But when a person deliberately violates a moral or natural law, he must be righted and set upon the right road. This violation is sin; sorrow and crime follow

and retribution must right the injustice. Often a whole life passes before the sin is paid; but death offers no hiding and it is paid here. So this is the plane of unpaid debts; debts long due and unredeemed. But come let us enter."

We opened the door and entered. As we did so, I heard a voice proclaiming: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. And blessed are they who never shut their hearts against the sufferings of mankind; for on the day they are judged, many errors will be forgiven because of that mercy."

We found the speaker to be a man of a commanding mien. Tall, broad-shouldered and square-jawed, he seemed to be the personification of moral strength, combined with physical force. He was dressed in a loose, flowing black robe, which was fastened at the shoulder with a red star.

The speaker continued: "There is no unforgivable sin; no sin that God in His infinite love and mercy, refuses to forgive despite retribution. This sin, hardness of heart, comes as near being unforgivable as any other. It is a sin deliberately done, in most instances; sometimes by indifference. But justice is allowed even for this sin: when the buffets of a hard world make the heart callous through many woundings, it is not considered hardness of heart and we do not punish. Come, follow me; and I will show you the mercy to the merciless."

As he turned to lead us, the door opened and a soul entered. He was led by a tall, strong teacher, who pushed him along. The soul had the most coldly diabolical face, now that the flesh had departed, than anyone I have ever seen.

"Ah!" exclaimed the teacher who had been speaking to us: "Welcome! We have been expecting you for some time. Thank the Most High for ridding the earth of your villianies. We have a very fine room awaiting you. Michael, lead him this way."

The soul, although his arms were bound behind him,

struggled to escape. He had regained full control of his body upon his entry to the division. His struggles were futile, however, for the strong teacher pushed him along easily. We followed the trio through descending corridors.

The soul snarled and contorted his face into expressions of deamonic hate. "Whatever is in store for me," he cried, "I am content; for my work will live after me!"

"Peace!" said the teacher; "There was never a Hell made that would be too hot for you, but you shall live in torments greater than you have ever dreamed. Be comforted at the thought."

Down, down, down we went; past darkened rooms and branching corridors, until we came to the ultimate depths of the division. Far, far down at the bottom of this abyss of tunnels, was a room.

As we entered, a light was flashed from a round spot on the wall opposite the door. I saw that we were in a room which was carved from solid rock. It was black and small—a dismal place.

The two teachers forced the soul to a seat which inclined to the back and proceeded to fasten him. They clamped his thighs, near the knee, to the seat; his wrists near his thighs and put a clamp around his neck. Thus, he was secured against moving a very great distance. A black robe was thrown over his body, a hood over his head. There he was left to the darkness—and his thoughts.

As we retraced our steps, the teacher spoke earnestly to us. He said: "All wicked souls fear darkness, because they fear their own thoughts. That little breath of right and reason which comes to all—conscience. That is not the brute punisher many consider it, but everyone creates his own conscience. Good deeds done in love and charity, are like sweet smelling insence that soothes and comforts. Evil deeds bring torment, remorse and lasting regret. The worse the deeds, the harder will be the regret when

the time comes to pay; and pay you will—dearly and in your heart's blood."

He continued: "After a time, when the soul recovers from the shock it has suffered, memory returns. Then, on the wall where the light shone, comes a review of its sins, in pictures which seem like memory long suppressed. They move with familiar gestures and speak in long-forgotten tones. The soul can hear the sobs of his victims and see their pitiful pleas for mercy. He then knows the sorrow, pain and shattered love he has inflicted upon others."

"Remorse eventually enters his heart and crushes it into repentance. Who has ever discovered a greater punishment than the prick of conscience? And yet there are people on earth who *could* help others if they *would*; go selfishly and blindly through life, injuring where they might help; hurting where they might soothe; living for self—self alone. They pass away, without knowing their wrongs, and leave a memory respected and honored. Do you think it is easy for the Most High to grant forgiveness? Do you think a daily repentance will erase sin? Or a yearly revival or confession will atone?"

"Believing that the Christ died for your sins will never wipe out his blot. He died that your sins should be erased after your death. Without His and other's preparation, every soul might perish for his sins without a second chance. But *belief* in anything never helps at all; you must not only believe, but you must shape your life accordingly."

"Man must atone," he continued, "For every act of hard-heartedness he ever committed that has never been paid for. Do not think that a death-bed repentance will atone for a life filled with colossial sin. It cannot be escaped so easily! It must all be worked out! Every iota! But let us step into another room where they go who have been cleansed, and have bitterly worked out this sin."

We followed him to another room. Here were several people, both men and women. They were seated upon benches, which half circled the chair of a teacher. All wore robes of black, which resembled the garb of the Franciscan monks. Abject and contrite was their demeanor and I could see that hardness of heart had left them. Kindness and love were entering and enshrining them with a subtle glory.

Their teacher was speaking: "Ah; dear ones, nothing matters in the world, nay even in the Universe: but love. If you love your brother, can you lift a hand to hurt him? If you love your brother, how can you stand aside and see him suffer? No good has ever come of shutting your heart to a brother in distress. Has it not been said: 'If you hurt even the least of these, my brethren, you hurt me also?' O think—think and revise your ways; not from the fear of retribution, but from a genuine love for your brethren. The earth is but a testing place to try your metal; if you fail in the things earth has to offer, how can you be trusted in an important place in the City?"

My companion, as the time was getting short, took me by the sleeve and we retraced our steps to the ebony gate.

The second chamber door was black, but not such a radiating black as was the first. My companion led me before it and remarked that a grevious sin was righted in the second division.

Then, opening the door, we entered. A voice exclaimed: "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for their's the kingdom of heaven."

The speaker was a teacher of medium build and had even, handsome features. He wore a garment which greatly resembled that of the teachers of the first division, except his was of a lighter hue.

He greeted us respectfully and said that he knew of our coming. "This division," said he, "Is for the ones who have broken the rule of life and have not been poor

in spirit. One part of this division is given to the egotistical; the other, more serious, to the intolerant. Let us proceed."

We followed him to a room where we saw several souls with teachers beside them, talking earnestly. I took the liberty of listening to one of them. He said: "If you have searched your soul to its furthest depths and know its Godliness and strength; if you have developed your mind to its highest possible state; if you have lived on earth as you ought to have lived; if you have looked wrong in the face and fought it; if you have met sin and resisted it—then and only then should you have great pride. But you could never be egotistical, for egotism is a confession of inferiority."

"Pride of family," he continued, "Is nothing but foolery; for all families have both fools and seers, sinners and good men. No one should be proud of the great among his ancestors, unless they became great by sacrifice—by a life of sacrifice and love. If they became great through war or intrigue, shame should be present when you remember them; you should turn your face from them and try to redeem, in your life, the sins they commited."

"But the greatest folly of all is the pride of wealth. Think! Great wealth was and is gotten by the spoilation of others. In *every* great fortune you will discover the 'claws and horns'."

"But," remonstrated the soul to whom he had been speaking, "It is true that my pride was in riches; but my father made his fortune in mining. He paid his miners well and made them prosperous."

"Ah!" said the teacher, "He did not spoil his miners, as many would have done; but how did he make his money? By selling to the rest of the people his products at great prices; thereby spoiling even more people than otherwise. Believe me! Wealth was made by the toiling of the people; they should receive their share."

"I see and believe;" said the soul; "The only things that count in life are charity and benevolence."

"You are quite right, my son!" cried the delighted teacher. "Everything we make a god of but the real God, turns to dust and is soon overthrown. There is no glory in personal pride; only in the joy of helping others is real pride and it is in that helping that a man becomes immortal."

We left the egotistical ones to the scourges of penance and proceeded to the next chamber. As we went along the corridor, our guide said: "Intolerant people are of several kinds. There is the type who professed toleration when they received no toleration, but as soon as toleration was bestowed upon them, they refused it to others. I am speaking in a religious sense, but the same is true in politics. No nation is free from the sin and the countries which seem the freest are the most intolerant. Many are today persecuted for social beliefs; yesterday the persecution was because of religious beliefs."

"The second type of intolerant persons, are the ones who are intolerant through ignorance, pure and simple. They sneer at learning and hate wisdom. They are the type that form mobs and murder innocent people. Their sin is great but not as great as the third type."

"The third type," he continued, "Is generally composed of well educated people, who see in their education an opportunity to get an easy living. So they enter the clergy. They believe in God because it pays! They tell of a fiery Hell and a wrathful God; they tell of the folly of wealth and receive a very large salary. The world, in its sin and blindness, calls them staunch patriots and good men. But, whatever they are called, they are shams and hypocrites; their lives are lies. They pollute the earth and their presence is an insult, flaunted in the face of the Most High."

After he had cooled down, he continued: "The punishment for these people is severe; but not half as great

as they deserve. They should be forever damned. But He is merciful, even to the greatest sinners and even *they* have a second chance. But do not think they are easily forgiven. Also, they must pass through the first chamber of this division, for an intolerant person is also egotistical."

Presently we came to a darkened room in which were countless souls. Always through the twilight a great voice denounced them in this manner: "The word came to you, but you received it not. The truth was always before you, but you ignored the truth. Merciful is the All-Highest; for, although once rejected he comes again, bearing his great words of truth. Receive them; for the way to forgiveness shall not always be open for you to traverse."

These words resounded through the darkened room. I stood and gazed down at the huddled mass of misled souls. "Surely!" thought I, "Surely if the mists of misconception and ignorance had not been before the eyes of these people, they would have seen and known the truth when it appeared before them."

Sorrow filled my heart; for some were there who had much virtue and would be far advanced but for this great sin. Yet the sin is a grave one and must be bitterly atoned.

Passion and lust were still present among the souls in this division and increased the suffering.

Presently my guide touched my elbow; and at his whispered suggestion, we went to the next chamber. It was perfectly dark; and the only means by which I could ascertain that souls were present, was by the deep and mournful groans that assailed my ears. Many throats gave many tones to the volume, but all were caused by despairing and inward suffering.

"What horrible punishment are these people enduring?" I queried, aghast at such evidence of pain.

"The torture or solitude, the conscience and no escape; either in sleep, death or insanity;" replied our guide.

At that moment a great voice resounded through the room, saying: "Accursed be you, false shepherds; who misled your flocks for your own gain! The Most High will cast you forth, into everlasting darkness: until your actions, which so persecuted His people, will have been atoned for ten fold!" ,

A great groan of pain arose from the room when the souls heard this damnation. It smote upon my ears; and smiting, it wounded deeply my soul.

"Come;" said I, "Let us depart; so I may tell my friends not to come to this place of torment!"

They agreed with me and together, we retraced our steps to the door of the division.

"Ah," said our guide, "All must come here who sin this sin; and will abide longer if they ignore your warning. The All-Highest is merciful, yet He is just."

We emerged from the door of the second division and stood before the entrance of the third division. This door was not black, as were these preceeding, but was a bright, blood-red. We opened the door; and as we entered, a voice exclaimed: "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God! Welcome; my brethren, to the abode of flaming passion; where all the passion, if combined, would consume the earth in its unholy flame. Come with me; here you will see the four varieties of passion, each separated. The first you will see, is the passion for pleasure; not in its natural form, which is a natural and cleanly relaxation, but the gross and sensual passion for pleasure and excitement."

He continued: "Each room of this division is for the correction of a passion which gives a certain amount of pleasure for the time, but afterwards, pain. When I speak of the passion for pleasure, therefore, I mean the pleasure which is not expressly forbidden by either public opinion or law; but which pleasure is a sin. There are several parts to the first room, namely: The pleasure for gaudy show, the pleasure of rabid excitement and the pleasure of disrespect."

"The second room," he continued, "Is for the gluttons and drunkards. In this place, are also drug takers. The third room is for the ones, who in life, had insatiable and unnatural sexual passions. This room is divided into two parts, one for the male and one for the female. The last room is for the passion of anger. Come; let us survey these places."

We accompanied him; and as we advanced, a spirit of frenzy was wafted to me; a hopeless frenzy. The further we advanced, the stronger became the hopeless, helpless striving for something that eluded. All along the journey it was present and I encountered it many times on the first plane.

Presently we entered a large room. There, I saw many men and women, all naked; sitting in ashes, muck and filth. They were the lovers of gaudy show. Some believed in clothing their carcasses in fine and showy clothing. Some, in their vanity, loved their shapely body or their beautiful face. Some loved to have a gorgeous show around them. Many desired more and finer possessions than their neighbors.

There was little to remind them of such vanities. They were naked, sitting in filth and surrounded by lowliness. Each one had a mirror, a large mirror, before them; in which they could see a reflection of their glory.

I noticed a strange thing, which I must mention. Not one had a perfect form and the ones who had taken such a pride in their forms while living, were possessed of the most gnarled forms in this place. The mirrors must have been relished.

Our guide endeavored to explain these distortions. "It," he remarked, "is caused by their distorted manner of living. Take, for instance, the case of the women; the face, in their case, while perfect in form, is entirely covered with a very thick enamel making a mask. The nose is uncovered; and the conditions here make that member very shiny. Of course they can see the shiny nose and that is added torture. Some have no ears;

having hidden them during life. That is strange, for ears are not immoral, but decorative."

"See how smooth and fine the neck and bosom appear; and the limbs below the knee. They were shown to excess in life and so are not hidden, not diminished here. The parts they tried to lace, bind and cramp during life have been denied them here. How much better it is for people to live as the Creator of All intended them to live; to walk through life with free, untrammeled footsteps, unhindered by the binding of modern clothing."

"The men are only slightly better than the women in this respect. Man is slave to fashion scarcely less than women. This is especially true in those cancers of civilization called cities. I will say no more; for once I was a man."

'In different parts of the world, a certain adapted type of clothing is necessary. Man is a delicate animal, and cannot endure the burning tropics or the freezing arctics, without covering. More than is necessary is a vanity, and a sin; less, is a degradation and a carnality, so a sin."

"Remember," he continued, "it is an unchanging law of nature, that every part of the living body that is not used, is eventually lost. In the flesh, in one lifetime, this seldom happens; in the spirit, the effect is soon noticed. For the spirit fluctuates and is ruled by the living body. It is not unusual that one day may see a change in the shape and size of the spirit."

"The distortions you see, therefore, is the result of wrong living; and cannot be cured in a day. But time and right healing seldom fail. In time, the cure will prove effectual and the members will grow to the natural proportions."

I tried to conceive the torment endured by a person, who was long accustomed to be beautifully decked. To be used, in life, to admire and to have others admire their beauty. Then to die and find themselves naked and distorted. No imagination can outdo the reality—the reality of these peoples' humiliation.

We next went to the room where the cure for rabid excitement is found. As we passed along, our guide said: "The violent passion for rabid excitement is a form of insanity. But it is a madness which bends and twists the soul making it hideous. The cure we use would be considered severe, but its the only *cure*."

As he finished speaking, we entered a room which was colored gray and green. A soft green light illuminated the place. Sombre stillness reigned. Upon looking around me closely, I observed souls fastened to low seats. They could not move around very freely. The whole thing interetsed and puzzled me greatly, so I turned to question our guide. To my surprise, I could not hear a syllable.

He motioned us both from the room: when we had left, he answered the questions which had been seething in my brain. He said to us: "The reason the silence was so profound, is that all sound waves have been nullified by a peculiar method used in conjunction with the green light you saw illuminating the room. This method may be explained to you later, but I may not now. The flame of passion which burns in the minds of the sufferers there, is counteracted in that manner. In course of time, the flame dies down and is extinguished. Only twice a year is the green light changed to a white and that is when spring comes to the earth. Then there is great rejoicing in Heaven, which is felt on Earth. As this sin is slight, the respite is given here alone.

"Let us pass on to the next room which is for the punishment of disrespect."

We then turned our footsteps toward the third part of the first room of the third division of the first plane. As we went along, our guide cautioned us, saying: "There is a door of crystal between the room and the corridor, beyond which it is not best to venture. Stay, therefore, by my side."

At length we reached the doorway of crystal. I looked upon a terrible scene. By the rays of a ghastly white light I could see souls strapped to the floor. While over and around them, huge, slimy serpents writhed and crawled. They never inflicted bodily injury upon the souls in their loathsome crawlings, for they were without heads. I venture to say, however, the abhorrence and disgust created in the minds of the souls by the repugnant embrace, was fearful.

"They are reaping the store of lowliness and uncleanliness which they fostered during their life; if we can say they really lived;" said our guide, "Brainless and unrighteous, they cast the vileness of their own making upon the wise and good. They hail from the lowest scum of earth and should enjoy the society of these reptiles. Now let us go to the abode of the gluttons, drunkards and drug-takers."

We then left these wretched people and moved on to the abodes of the unfortunates, to whom our guide referred. These sins are very similar and are atoned for very similarly. We came at last to the room set aside for the redemption of these sins.

It was a great room, and well filled. The room was circular in shape and was capped by a low ceiling. The room was divided into three parts by sheets of crystal, extending from the outer wall to the centre and from the ceiling to the floor. In this crystal there was no refraction of light, so the room did not appear to be divided at all.

The portion of the room which we first visited, was that of the drug-takers. What a scene was there! A scene that might shatter anyone's faith in humanity! There, on benches, sat the victims of the narcotic traffic. The traffic fostered by the greatest country in Europe and championed at the point of the sword! There they sat in Heaven; without the thing that brought them a taste of Heaven on earth, but which brought bitter, bitter returns.

The room was barren but for the souls and the benches. Yet the sickly-sweet odor of opium could be detected throughout the room. It was like a drop to one dying of thirst: keeping him alive, but making him shriek for more! More!

You might say such a method would never cure the soul of that terrible passion; but it does. In this place it is an infallible cure. What agonies these souls endured with such denial and reminder of 'The Fruit of the Gods'! Some suffered in silence, with beads of moisture upon their brow; but suffered bravely. Others, with the smell of the beloved perfume in their nostrils, became wild. First they prayed, then wildly cursed. Neither availed.

We soon turned from this awful scene and entered the room of the gluttons. These creatures were fastened by one foot, with a stout chain, to a ring set in the floor. The rings were in a circle. In the centre of the room, just beyond the reach of the souls, were all manner of foods. Luscious peaches; ruddy apples, juicy oranges and all manner of luscious and desirable fruits were in the pile.

And not only were there fruits, but everything eatable that appeals to the palate. I asked our guide if I may be permitted to taste the fruit. He smiled and consented. I selected an apple and lo! like the Dead Sea fruit, it turned to dust in my mouth! How these souls were lured by palatable looks! Striving to get those foods that so dissappointed. I pitied them; but my guide told me that they keep struggling to reach the food, only to spit it forth in dust. Such a terrible effort after nothing; it saddened me, for it is done too much on earth.

I was glad to turn from the glutton's room to the room for the drunkards. These people were chained in a circle, as were the gluttons. Within the circle, beyond their reach, were sparkling liquors: champagne, burgandies and claret tempted them; juleps with tinkling

ice in a crystal glass mocked them; while good, aged whisky, rum and rye tempted their palates. Great casks of beer with dripping faucets lured them. Vodka and minor drinks were there. While for those with refined palates, they had the pleasure of gazing at cognac and absinthe.

There was dust two inches thick upon the floor, and the slightest movement stirred up volumes, which choked and strangled the soul. The wine-bibbers softly and cunningly flattened themselves in efforts to reach the liquors. It seemed as though they were striving to resemble pancakes. They squirmed upon their portly bellies in their futile strivings. Some dignified beer-drinkers licked up the drops they could reach, like animals. All who could not even accomplish this, wept and pulled the fortunate ones away.

What would they not have done for a drink of the fluid? Their tongues, covered with dust, hung out. They were truly piteous spectacles! I turned to my companion, in pity, saying: "This is truly a degrading exhibition! It seems a sure cure for the disease; but don't they injure their souls in this manner?"

"Perhaps they do, slightly;" he answered, "But even if the cure is worse than the evil, it is a cure."

"It seems so;" I said, "But don't you eliminate evil because it hurts the soul?"

"In a measure, but primarily we eliminate evil because it is evil", he answered.

"I see clearly;" I rejoined, "But let us proceed; for if we tarried longer here, I would be tempted to help these unfortunates."

"Then let us by all means depart;" replied our guide, "For if you tried to defeat Divine Justice, you would surely die."

So we hurried to the third room, our guide leading the way and saying as we went along: "There are two parts to this room; one for men and one for women.

We will visit the latter first. Their numbers are very large, though less than the men."

He continued: "This passion is good and vital; it is present in everyone and must be present—the human race would die if it were absent. It is as much present and is as necessary as a hand or a foot. But if this passion is fostered and indulged, it outgrows all bounds; it becomes a sin. It gnaws at life and warps the intellect. So this cleansing is not for the healthy, normal passion; it is for the unnatural desire, which fastenes its tentacles into life and kills. The normal passion dies with the body; the abnormal warps the soul and continues even after death."

We soon came to a large room, which was divided into a number of small chambers. They were without number and looking down a corridor, which extended as far as I could see, their doors so blended in the distance as to resemble a marking on the two walls. We entered the first one we came to and saw in the dim light, a woman. She was sitting upon a bench, so placed that she could not see us without turning.

She was entirely naked, except for her abundant hair, which flowed beyond her waist. She displayed no modesty; but how could she know we were there; in a place where no men entered? So modesty would be misplaced. A female teacher, attired in the garb of the teachers, was before her. She was teaching of the folly of unrighteous love.

"But it is so hard;" said the soul, "to be parted from the life I loved so well. I never sinned, knowing it to be sin and I was a loving, chaste wife. I loved my husband and the hours I spent with him were bliss."

"To be happy is never a sin;" answered the teacher, "And you had a loving husband. But know you: punishment is not given in this division or this room, for things you *have* done; rather is the impurity in the soul cleansed. You nursed in your heart a terrible passion; it warped your soul. For know you—marriage does

not condone this fault; it is a personal sin and not a sin against the world."

"Am I to be condemned for what I *might* have done? Is that just?" she asked.

"Your passion was unholy and carnal;" replied the teacher. "Passion was in your heart, was fostered—grew. It must be absent before you can advance. For this is a place where earthly things *cannot* come. You will not be punished; merely cleansed."

"Let the cleansing continue, then, until I am pure;" said the soul, "but do not condemn me for the failings of the weak flesh."

"The Most High encases souls in flesh, but He does not condemn the souls for the weakness of the flesh," replied the teacher. "The process here is to cleanse the earthly impurities from the soul, to prepare it for its flight to the City. Such a thing cannot be done on earth; that is impossible."

We turned away here, at a motion from our guide and proceeded along the long corridor which stretched between the litle chambers. As we proceeded, he spoke to us, saying: "That is typical of the souls received into this room. They sigh for the little blisses which were their portion on earth, but overlook the greater ecstacies of the City. Now let us view a woman, fresh from earth, who was notorious for her carnalities in a carnal world."

He led us to a great door, which he unfastened with great difficulty. We advanced straightway, but were assailed by such a blast that we were nearly overcome. Such a blast of passion, frenzy and vileness, that we were fain to close it again.

However, we advanced boldly; and descended a long flight of stone steps. The smoke there was so thick, that we could not see a foot before us. At last we came to the bottom of the flight and entered a room.

A red light filled the room and pierced huge, rolling clouds of smoke, that covered the ceiling. This terrible illumination revealed everything in awful distinctness.

In the centre of the room was an altar, which appeared to be composed of a soft substance. It was fitted with gyves, imbedded far in the block. Fastened thereon firmly, lay a woman.

She was entirely naked: but her nakedness assaulted the eye, for her entire lack of shame and restraint impressed the fact that she *was* naked. Her hair which was raven black, streamed to the floor.

Her ankles were fastened against the side of the altar, which was curved from the head to the foot and cut entirely straight from the top to the floor. The altar was as wide as her body and slightly longer. Her legs were bent at the knees and fastened so that her feet nearly touched the ground. Her knees were fastened at the curved edge of the altar, while a band was around her waist. Her wrists were fastened with bands of steel. So she was secured beyond hope of escape.

All through the murky air, visions flitted; enticing—maddening visions; each adding to the blinding passion that tore her. She writhed and foamed at the mouth, in her passion; she gnashed her teeth and screamed aloud: "Give me but one more embrace; one more night of love!"

When she saw us, her passion grew beyond bounds of belief. Had she not been so securely fettered, she must have broken loose. If ever there were a burning Hell, it must blaze up to Heaven, to be able to cause such torment.

"My pleadings have borne fruit!" she cried, when we appeared; "Come to my arms, for I desire thee greatly! Am I not desirable? Am I not good to look upon? Come then and turn this Hell into Heaven!"

No shame was present, either in her manner or thoughts. She disgusted me; but when our guide was about to rebuke her, I said: "Let her be. We are making her suffer; then why rebuke her. Let us go and leave her alone; for if we cannot ease her pain, we should not aggravate it." My companions agreed with me, and to-

gether we left the room and journeyed to the other section, or that for men.

Did I say men? It could not have been *men* I saw. All were naked—as naked as the woman I had just seen. The men, however were not fastened, but were running wildly about the room. They were futilely pursuing phantoms. Phantasms; ghosts of the things they long had pursued on earth. Such enticing—beautiful phantoms; always evading, yet always luring—luring and deceiving. Dancing and flitting before them, they always eluded, but never discouraged.

Need I relate the groans of despair; the snarls of foiled desire or the enticing cries of the pursuers? The ruddy fire of passion burned in every bosom—it lighted the room with a Hellish glow. The frenzy pierced my soul; the bedlam arose in waves of horrid sound. Even now I am shaken by the memory of that scene; I shall neither forget it nor see its equal.

Silently we left these men and proceeded to the next room. This place was divided into dark grottoes. Following our guide, we entered one and beheld a strange sight. There, in the furthest end of the room, was a man chained to a large slab of ice. The broad, smooth sheet was inclined to the rear and occupied the entire end of the room.

The man was terrible to behold; for within his head, burned a terrible searing flame. It shone from his eyes and illuminated the room with a lurid light. It appeared as though his head was on fire.

"Such is the man who allows anger to scorch his intellect. The monstrous furies which he enjoyed and fostered throughout life have so twistered his soul, that he now is in a bad state. Time and the beautiful forgiveness of the Most High are the only remedies. Fury is a passion which wrecks the soul more than any of the others. The animal, man, is naturally a furious being; when he succumbs to fury, it reverts him to the beast. Other passions do likewise, but not to such a hideous

extent;" said our guide. "Let us now return to the door, as this is the end of my division."

"So be it," I replied, "Let us return to the gate."

The door of the fourth division was grayish-black, most like the color of black-frost. As we entered, a voice resounded, saying: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Welcome, brothers! I rejoice at another opportunity given us to present the wonders of the planes to man."

The speaker was a tall, gaunt stranger, dressed as a teacher. He appeared to be a splendid example of moral strength; one who has met the weakness and moral cowardlinesses of the world and come through all undaunted.

He wore a robe of the same hue as the door through which we had passed. He spoke to us, saying: "In this division four great sins of arrogance, all related in a way, are redeemed. The lowest is wrong ambition; the next is avariciousness; the third is scorn and the last is hate. In all these, the rule is broken: 'Love ye all men above yourself.' For then you may have more reason for self regard. Let us go and see the manner in which these people atone for this great sin."

He led the way to the first room, in the centre of which was a crystal pool. Lying around this pool were souls, all drinking their fill of the pure and limpid waters. There were some who refused to drink; for the benefit of whom, teachers stood and held the reticent heads beneath until they drank freely.

Our guide said: "Hate, whether justified or not in the code of the world, disfigures the soul. Thus it is unfit for heaven. This pool is fed by the stream of forgiveness, which flows at the command of the All-Highest. They who drink, receive a portion of that forgiving grace which pardons all. This water is the only thing in the universe which will quench hate, restore the healthy proportions and renew the vitality of a soul, so disfigured. Remember, also: they whom you see here,

have passed through the purging of most sins, especially the sin of envy. They are here now, only because they hate those who have wronged them. In doing so, they have broken this rule of life."

"The wisdom is divine;" I remarked.

"Yes; it is wiser than any human can imagine;" he replied, "For it is divine wisdom. We will next view the punishment of they who sat in the seat of the scornful."

"Friends," said I, "It is so peaceful and so full of God's love here, that I would linger."

"It is growing late;" said my companion, "I can hear the crow of the cock; let us hasten."

"Ay, let us hasten;" said our guide; "As I was saying, we will next view the scornful. They scorned others, less happily situated than themselves. Behold them."

We passed from the first room and into the second. There we saw a deep pit sunk in the centre of the floor. The pit was filled with mud, slime and filthy water. The edges of the pit were steeply inclined and as smooth as ice.

In this choice and exclusive watering place were innumerable souls. In fact the pit, which was large, was so filled with souls, that I was fairly reminded of a cobblestone street: the heads were so numerous and so close together.

"I am proud of my charges," said our guide, "I have in my division, more souls than any other division except the sixth; but mine are much more select. Here, with the scornful, are the envious; the first *had* and sinned, but the second had *not* and also sinned. Neither had contentment nor spiritual health which will cause the downfall of your country in years to come. It is the white race's curse."

The souls were much stirred to hear our voices, an unusual thing with them; they craned their necks to obtain a better view. Some, who had not been there

long, tried by pushing and climbing over their fellows to gain the brink. They were unsuccesful.

I heard a voice say to them: "Ye who were arrogant and proud in the flesh, behold how lowly you are now! What remains of all in which you had pride. Where is all for which you scorned? But you have at least something to preserve your vanities. Go back into the muck of your own making!" To the envious, the voice said: "Ye sluggards—parasites; who spent the precious years of fleshly existence in desiring the possessions of others! Ye spent the time ye might have used usefully, in envy. Ye have done nothing but evil on earth—remain in evil now!"

I was truly pained to see those souls so lowly, for many had high rank on the earth. After gazing at them for a while, I could muster no pity, we departed. After passing through a long and narrow corridor, we finally came to another room.

This was the room for the avaricious. This room was peculiar in several respects. In the first place, it had many sides; ten, I believe. Then, the centre of the ceiling, which was greatly higher than the walls, came to a point. Upon looking upward from the floor, this room gave one the impression of being within a paper pyramid. In the apex of the ceiling, a light burned.

In the centre of the floor were piled all manner of precious and desirable jewels and gold. The avaricious and greedy were struggling for these riches.

They were forever searching for some spot in which to hide the treasures they carried in their arms. Or even some spot in which they might lay the gold until they could get more. There were no darksome places where no one would bother the treasure, to take it from them. There was no corner where they might protect the surplus treasure. Always that cursed light shone down from the ceiling, in pitiless, discovering rays.

So they did the thing that was in their hearts; they piled their treasures against the side of the wall and

hurried to the central pile of desirables. They got more; but alas—when they returned, some one had taken that which they had left. Then it was amusing to hear them cry: "I have been robbed!"

But there were some who showed a little more common sense than the crowd; they went partners, one to guard the pile, the other to fight for more. Soon the pile in the centre was exhausted and the treasures centred in a very few. But the owners of the treasure were just as naked as the crowd!

It soon reached this cornered state while I watched. As a natural result, it soon after occured that all the treasure was in the possession of a powerful league. It was certainly interesting how the people protected those baubles.

Then a voice cried: "See how much worth the treasure is now; and see the fruit of your labor." Then the light went out and a terrible whirlwind blew in the room. I could hear cries of fear.

The light came on, and lo: all the treasure had vanished, but dry leaves propelled by the high wind flew about the room.

Then the voice said: "Oh fools that you are, to place your trust in a god of gold, for he has feet of clay. The God of righteousness is the only true God; turn to Him and forget these baubles."

Some there were who listened to the words and cried in their hearts: "Deliver us, oh God, from this place of folly and teach of thy own true name." These few, my companion said, were purged of the sin of avarice and sent ahead.

We soon left this room, interesting to me as it was, and came to the last room of the division. This was the room for the wrongly ambitious. It was perfectly dark, except for some strange phenomena. In the air floated strange phantoms. These strange looking objects seemed to typify different human ambitions.

It was a peculiar thing; I saw crowns, official insignia, marshal's batons and other emblems of power and glory. There were even worlds floating amid this jumble and confusion.

Below this jumble, a great crowd pushed and fought. All were striving for a prize, all were failing. Our guide explained that it was not for these odd prizes they were striving but a strange hallucination possessed all these people. Those objects created a belief among the people that if they could grasp the phantoms, they would achieve their lifelong ambition. Yet the phantoms always eluded. Hence they were so bitterly striving.

We did not linger long. My companions seemed in a hurry, besides there was always the danger of being trampled under foot; for the ambitious are never careful about others. So we soon retraced our steps to the fifth division.

The door of the fifth division was the color of a blanched face; its very aspect seemed fear-stricken. When we entered, we heard a voice say: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you; and say all manner of evil against you, *falsely*—for my sake. Then rejoice and be exceedingly glad; for great shall be your reward in Heaven."

The speaker was a teacher. He was dressed in a flowing robe of a pearl-gray color. Around his waist was tied a steel wire flagetelle. He seemed to be a strong, stern executioner of Divine justice. Faithful and devout himself, he expected all others to be the same.

He spoke firmly and with the air of a pious and worthy man. "Come;" he said, "And see how these fools, who could not withstand the weapon of ridicule, are atoning for their weaknesses. The soul that cannot withstand ridicule, is a weak soul. Even though this be the only fault, it cannot enter Heaven; for to enter Heaven, the soul must be as pure and spotless

of vanities, weaknesses and sins, as on the day it was born. Then, and only then, can it hope to reach the goal."

He led us to a very large room. Yet the ceiling was very low; in fact, not above six feet from the floor. Souls, lying prostrate, filled the room; yet, despite the fact that none were secured, I could detect no movement among the vast throng. It seemed to be a region of sleep; to be a place where its sable wings abode forever. Yet, I was assured, no sleep occurred after death.

All were lying in sackcloth and ashes. Often, across the legion of inert bodies, a sigh arose like a winter wind through barren branches. Often low lamentations like waves of remorse, swept over and above the throng; voices of regret.

Our guide, looking over the room, said to us: "These are the souls, weakened by cowardice, who must remain here until strength returns. Each surrender, each sacrifice of the soul to the body, weakens the soul but does not strengthen the body. Souls have come here so weak as to be non-supporting. The denial of truth is a grave sin; it does incalculable harm. Two forces are always struggling for supremacy throughout the universe, evil and good. Both are real, concrete forces. You are seeing how the purging of sin takes the grossness from the soul and makes it able to enter Heaven. The souls who enter here from the lower divisions are not the same in appearance or *substance* as when they first entered this plane. After they leave this division, they have something which they did not have when they entered. Thus, you see, that this division is different from all others you have visited previously. Formerly they *left* something behind them in their education. From now on, they will go away with something they were without before. Ah! Very, very few ever enter Heaven without passing through this

division; even though they had no other sins! There are more here than you would ever imagine!"

I heard weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Many, who on earth considered themselves strong, were as weak as sinners in their souls. Many who thought that to desert truth would do them no injury, were but weakening their souls, so that the germs of more deadly sins could creep in and destroy.

The door of the sixth division was white; but it had a touch of blue, making it appear a cold, barren white. We opened the door, which was cold to the touch and a voice spoke to us. "Blessed are they who hunger, and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."

The speaker was a short, placid teacher, who spoke with a depth of assurance and kindliness that was soothing. He was dressed in a robe of spotless white, which hung over his portly figure in graceful folds.

"Come," said he, "And I will show you the ones who were content to live without righteousness; but, on the other hand, did not sin a vital sin."

He led us forthwith, to a large, oval room. In the centre were countless souls, all clothed in their virtue. The clothing of the majority was, I am sorry to say, scanty; on earth it would have been considered shocking. But these souls were free from most of earth's sins, so their lack of clothing was not striking.

What struck me as strange, at first, was the light. It seemed to be the light from a flame; for, in flickering and flaring, threw wavering shadows about the room. Our guide noticed my perplexity and pointed upward. It was then I saw what had caused such a peculiar light. In the centre of the ceiling, which was dome-shaped, shone a wavering, blazing flame.

Teachers stood beside each soul and told of the strength of God. Ah, sometimes it took long to create a love for good in the heart of a soul! In course of time, this happened, however; then it was the soul was through the first plane.

Then the blazing flame would let down a tongue of its fire, which would light upon the soul's head. Then it was time for the soul, with the love of God and the desire for good in its heart, to step forth to the seventh division.

We followed a soul, which had received the flame upon its brow and came to the door of the seventh division. It was broad, divided in half and was pure and spotlessly white. We entered a large room; not large compared with some I had formerly seen, but large compared with rooms on earth. It was brilliantly lighted from a source I could not detect.

Upon our entrance, a teacher hurried to us and said; "This is the final division of the first plane. From here the souls advance the second, or building plane."

At this juncture, several souls entered. Our guide hurriedly excused himself and led the souls to an altar-like object which stood in the centre of the room.

The souls lay upon this and composed themselves, as they were ordered by the teacher. Soon, I saw them grow limp and lifeless. It seemed as though life had fled. Then they slowly faded until only the altar was visible.

"That is the way," explained our guide, "We send the cleansed souls to the second plane. Their soul leaves the grosser astral body and becomes finer and more sublimated. As we are in the astral body ourselves, we cannot see them."

"Exactly;" said my companion, "And so our journey is ended. On earth, the sun is shining; you must go. If you remember this trip, write it down; for if that comes to pass, in seven days I will again call upon you to visit the remaining three planes of the empire 'without the city.' But if you remember when you awake what you have seen, write it all down. Now get upon the altar and do not forget. Farwell."

I clmbed upon the altar. "Farewell," I said.

I felt myself dropping, dropping. The light of the room contracted; it grew smaller and smaller until it

reached the size of a tiny star. Then darkness fell upon me. I felt as though I were falling for eons of time.

* * * *

Then, suddenly I stopped. A dim light dawned before me. I opened my eyes and collecting my senses, found myself in my room, in bed. When I arose, I felt as though I had never slept; but I arose with the memory of that trip fresh upon my mind. It was so impressed—so indelible, that I shall never forget it—I could not if I wished and I do not wish. So I have written it down. This is the story of my trip to the first, or purging plane of the empire which is Without the City.

Chapter III.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND PLANE

My second great dream occurred exactly as my companion had predicted: a week subsequent to my visit to the first plane. I retired early on that memorable night, as I had not felt well all day. Shortly after my head touched the pillow, I was fast asleep.

My first conscious sensation was one of extreme lightness. Have you ever in your dreams, felt as though you were floating in space? Such was my feeling at that period; and it was soothingly peaceful.

Then, as though I had been transported as swiftly as light travels, a complete scene stood before my eyes. It was as though I had been standing in its midst all the while, when a light had suddenly been lighted to its greatest brilliancy.

I was standing in an extremely odd room. This room was fan-shaped, the angular end being behind me, while the side walls diverged at possibly a thirty degree angle; until they met at the other end of the room, a considerable distance away. This wall was equidistant from the angular end in every part; therefore it made a curved line. The whole room might be said to resemble the sector of a circle.

There were no windows in the room and but four doorways. Three were on the curved end, while one was in the angular end. The latter was by far the widest; it looked like a blind Cyclopian eye; for darkness filled it utterly. Darkness awaited without, filling this wide door; not the darkness which could occur on earth, but the darkness of the unfathomable void.

Not so with the other doors; for although they were, like the wider doorway, doorless; and stared like eyes without lids, light shone through the gaps they left in the wall. The lights shone through these doors held back the darkness that strove to enter. Through the doorway to the left, shone a green light; through the centre one, streamed a violet light; while through the doorway to the right, shone a pure white light. These lights commingled, forming ghastly and unearthly tints, giving to the room a wierd and eerie effect.

Leading from each of the three doorways were furrows; tracks worn by the feet of countless souls, who through the ages have passed that way.

Through each of the three doorways came souls; flowing, flowing steadily; never stopping, none returning. Like three streams they joined and passed out into the darkness, which swallowed them completely. Never was there a great number, but constantly and never ceasingly they went into oblivion.

Yet I am sure they did not know of this trip, for they moved like automatons; like beings devoid of all initiative. No expression changed their countenances; no look of life illuminated their features. "What a poor fate have souls," thought I, "When no more hope of freedom can be extended to them beyond the grave than the freedom they enjoy in the flesh."

While I was musing in this manner, a voice by my side said: "Welcome back to the Kingdom's school house."

There is the difference between the kingdom of men and the Kingdom of Heaven. Earth is ruled by men with different thoughts, standards of honesty and ideals" in a hit-or-miss fashion; often for the personal profit of the rulers. Heaven is ruled by men with no thought—no opportunity for gain; enveloped all the while in the beautiful presence of God. Love too, instead of being an abstract and formless term, used in a thousand different

ways and with a thousand different meanings; is in Heaven, a real and concrete presence. It is ruled by the good for righteousness.

I recognized in the voice which spoke to me, the comrade of the first plane. Upon turning, I had my belief confirmed upon again seeing my friend.

"Greetings!" said I; "I have returned to visit other parts of this world; to note the wonders of God and His love, justice and mercy."

"Well said!" exclaimed my companion; "But heretofore you have seen only his justice against wickedness. To-night you will see the justice of worthiness and its reward. Before, you have seen but little love; now you will see complete love; for in this kingdom, love is life."

"But follow me speedily," he continued, "And we may be able to view all the wonders of this plane, for the time is short and much can be seen. First, I will describe the plane in which we will travel."

"See," he continued, "upon the broad side of this room are three doorways. To the left is the one to the second plane; the next is to the third plane, whilst the one to the right is to the fourth plane. It would be better for me to say that these doors are *from* the planes instead of *to* them; for none ever returns this way."

"Behind us, on the other side, is a great, gaping doorway, with darkness without. This is the door to the universal void, through which a soul must pass if it would return to the earth. It is through this door that all souls who will not, or cannot pass through the planes, are returned to the flesh to re-enter life in fresh and clean bodies; to start life anew. Then they will have another chance to attain complete soul development. Mayhaps they will also taste some of the few joys that earthly existence extends to human beings."

"Do not look on these souls with either favor or disfavor; do not feel either contempt or admiration for them; for some there be who merit some of these feelings and some who merit others. So be content with noting

this place carefully, for it is important; then we will explore the region of the green light, which leads to the second plane."

So saying, he advanced to the door to the left, beckoning to me to follow. I obeyed; and passed from the room with the four doors, perhaps forever, into another room.

It was a large, round room, through which a strong green light shone. It illuminated every nook and cranny. But the strangest thing of all was: there was no door; then how could so many souls emerge?

"It is through here that all souls who abandoned the second plane must pass," said my companion; "Here they again obtain an astral body. For they had discarded one in the transition between the first plane and the second."

It was about that time I discovered the means of entrance to the room. The only object which relieved the bareness of the room, was a large altar set in the centre of the floor. It reminded me of the altar in the seventh room of the first plane. The only difference was: this one was black, while the other was white.

As I was gazing at the altar, something happened which decisively ended my perplexity. Over the altar appeared a cloud, which gradually became denser until it finally took the shape of a man. Soon he was so solid as to be opaque. Very shortly after, he moved and stiffly descended from the altar. He then walked the length of the room, disappearing through the door and so was lost to my sight.

After he had disappeared, my guide took my hand and said: "Come; if we would visit the second plane, we must discard the astral body which we now inhabit and enter the realms of morality clad in the soul alone. You will find the discarding of the astral body not a painful operation, so come with me."

He led me to the altar, upon which we lay. After a time, souls appeared where no souls had been visible.

Yet the room appeared the same and a green light shone over all.

My companion then arose and bade me descend. When he had descended, he looked at me and laughingly said: "It seems as though the operation were successful."

"Is it true," I asked, "That I have discarded my astral body?"

"Yes," he replied, "It is true. Just as true that you are now in the second plane. But I have much to show you; let us proceed. Come."

I followed him from the room into a long, narrow and seemingly endless corridor. The floor seemed to be composed of black glass or crystal; while the walls and the curved ceiling were of black marble. The whole corridor was lighted by a greenish light, giving the whole a strange and gruesome effect.

We travelled swiftly; much faster than if I had been walking on earth; yet it was quite a time before we reached the end of the corridor and entered the antechamber of the second plane.

THE SECOND PLANE

The room we entered resembled the ante-chamber of the first plane in shape and size only. As far as the superficialities, the two rooms were alike; but what a difference in spirit! Here a spirit of pure and righteous meditation reigned; a spirit which is sometimes discovered upon the earth, but which seldom lingers. Like a flower transplanted from the fields of heaven, it soon fades. On the second plane, and thenceforward, this spirit is so usual and so uninterrupted, that no one but me noticed its presence. So an inhabitant of the slums, when brought into the clean, wholesome country, notices a freshness and vitality in the air which the native takes, with all else, for granted.

Leading into this room, were three doorways: the doorway through which we had entered, the doorway leading to the second plane and a much used doorway, through which the souls, advancing from the first plane, entered.

We investigated this latter doorway and paid a short visit within its portals. We found a small room which was barren of all ornamentation and had but one thing of interest within. This was a black altar, which occupied the centre of the floor.

This room had but one doorway, the one through which we had entered. In this room, too, the souls entering first appeared in the form of a cloud, hovering over the altar. Then, growing clearer, they assumed the form of a person. Thus it appeared plain to me: when, in the seventh room of the first plane, the soul gradually faded away to a mist and was gone, at that very time the soul appeared here in the form of a cloud; and thus entered the second plane. Whether the first and second planes occupy the same spots; the latter being contained, invisible in the former; or whether they are a universe apart, matters little, I believe.

This room, important as it undoubtedly was, did not delay us a great length of time. Therefore we soon left and bent our course to the doorway of the second plane. We passed by numbers of souls, all showing life and intelligence in every feature. No pain left its mark upon them, although they must have suffered acutely in their passage through the first plane. Naturally, too, they showed nothing of the joy and peace, for these were still to be experienced.

What a different sort of anticipation reigned in this room! Here, they had nothing to fear, and much was in store for them: love, joy and the peaceful bliss of Heaven. No wonder I cried: "Oh what a place of peace and happiness is this! What a place for desire for the life to come! Surely Heaven is no better than this!"

But my companion smiled, and softly replied: "Not so. If the City were no better and the life therein no fuller, it would be a barren place indeed. These souls know nothing of Heaven's requirements; and not knowing, they would be useless within the City. They resemble a slate which has been cleansed of an error; and is only waiting for that which is right to be graven thereon. Until these souls learn all the necessities, they are not fit to be citizens of the Great Cosmos. The labor is great, but the reward will far exceed the toil. Come, let us proceed; for unless we do, we will never complete our journey in time."

We at length came to the great door and passed within its portals. Upon doing so, we faced a great chair upon which rested a cloud. From out of this cloud, a voice spoke and said to us: "This is the second plane; where the soul, stripped of all that is earthly, is clothed in the Heavenly. Clothed in the garments of virtue, the clothing of the City. Enter, then, and observe how virtue is given."

As the voice ceased, my companion took my hand. He led me past the great chair and to the doors of the divisions, which were beyond. They were seven in all and their doorways were hewn out of the living rock of the

cavern. Here, instead of the massive doors of the first that."
plane, were light, wicker gates; thinly made. They were so thin, that one could almost view the interior and make the fancy form heavenly images.
life and *all* strive for something they cannot attain. Be not disturbed; I have no curiosity beyond that which lays before me; but I *am* burning with impatience to see

Upon the crest of the first gate, the one farthest to the left, was a single star of silver. No other ornament adorned this fragile gate. My companion led me before it and said in a loud voice: "Devotion sustaineth."

As he spoke, the gate opened of its own volition allowing us to enter. As we passed through, my companion remarked: "That gate appears fragile; but if I had not uttered those words, which are the motto of this division, all the power of the earth might hammer in vain against its front."

Then we passed along; through a canyon so deep and with sides so precipitous, that they seemed to overhang. We had not proceeded any great distance, before we perceived someone approaching. When he had drawn near enough to discern details, I saw that it was a teacher. He was dressed in the usual white robe and had a silver star upon his shoulder.

He hailed us with great geniality and greeted my companion with the utmost of friendliness, though tempered with respect. "Hail—poet and wonderer!" he exclaimed to my companion, "Who sought on earth for those things only to be found here! The one you lost—and the goal to which you could not attain—",

"Hush!" exclaimed my companion, "Curb your galloping tongue! I may not divulge my identity to my friend here; you will betray me!"

The teacher seemed so rebuked and crestfallen, that I pitied him; and said: "What you have said will not betray him. All poets have lost something dearer than

He smiled at my hint and said: "Be it so; you shall behold all that speedily. This is the division for the teaching of devotion, which is the foundation of all progressive morality. Without devotion, no one would enter the City. Follow me."

As we followed, the walls of the chasm became less steep, until they became high hills. As they lost their steepness, they became farther apart and more fertile. Soon verdure and all kinds of wild flowers grew upon their slopes, lessening the wild and desolate appearance. Certainly the hand of no man was put forth to pluck these blossoms and no man's foot ever crushed their frail petals.

I looked back and saw how the hills became higher and higher, until where the canyon ended and the cave began, they had ascended into mountains. Above the cave, they kept rising, covered with a mantle of white, until it seemed as though they touched the sky.

In the meantime we had come to a narrow pathway which bordered a little, wayward stream. Soon the hills were far enough apart to allow a beautiful, sloping meadow. On this, spread out like a velvety tapestry, were innumerable, azure flowers. They were forget-me-nots. It seemed as though some sower had passed along, scattering these reflections of heaven all the way; that they might grow and he be remembered. The further we went along the bank, the thicker became the flowers; until it seemed as if we were walking between cool, mountain lakes.

Then we came to a teacher, surrounded by a group of pupils. He was speaking quietly, in a tone of gentle authority to his charges and I was content to abide there for a while and listen to his words.

I will neither repeat all his lecture, nor will I give his lesson word for word; but it might be an opportune time to give the *pith* of his discourse. He said: "Devotion to a cause means full belief in the goal of the cause. Not necessarily exalting the leader, who may be but the

personification of the thought, but in the thought itself. No cause can last without truth; no matter how many lies cover and change its semblance. A belief without truth is but a dead rotten thing; a routine of ceremonies and an upholding of dogmas. And as causes and beliefs contain truth, so you must love the truth in them; you should follow and staunchly defend that which holds the greatest truth. The things your eyes behold and your reason advises, you know to be truth. How can you, with the truth of this beautiful valley of flowers about you, fail to believe this the greatest truth to follow?"

"Yet you cannot fail to believe; for all the temptations and disbeliefs of the earth have long since fled. Believe and follow; the universe is before you. Disbelieve, and the way back is open; a new life in a new body, a gracious boon, follows. Oh be devoted to truth and truth will come to you; portal after portal of wisdom shall open. Follow truth and nothing shall be hidden but the power over life and death."

This, I imagine, will give a faint idea of the principles taught in this division. I turned to my friends, saying: "These principles are surely wise. I cannot help thinking: if the people of a community on earth were taught in such a manner with such an honesty of purpose, the community would be benefited."

Our guide smiled at my words and said: "Such a thing would be simple—if you could exclude all the selfishness underlying the teaching on earth, and taught what we teach, the country so developed would be the greatest on earth. *This* is the greatest community in the universe, for it is the only *real* community. We cannot allow anyone who is not qualified, mentally and spiritually, entrance into the City. They who have been refused admission, either because of any inferiority, or who refuse to be taught those things which would develop the faculties they possess, are deemed unworthy. They cannot join the multitude of the blessed. They are banished from the higher world and sent into the great void, which

separates the earth from the City. Then they are reborn. My friend here may have spoken before on this subject; but it is one of such vital importance, that one cannot emphasize it unduly."

"He has spoken of it before," I rejoined, "But it is a subject so interesting to me, that any amount of repetition is not unwelcome. Yet it raises questions in my mind which you must satisfy. The greatest question is: Does all the labor expended on these planes become lost and useless when the soul returns?"

"Decidedly not so;" replied my companion; "You remember that on the first plane you were told: 'The life of the human body shapes the soul.' Nothing is more wrong than to believe that the soul is immaculate and segregated from the body. No; it is as though you poured water into an earthen mold. As the mold is altered, so the water which is within it is altered. So, also; the mold, which is earthen, makes the pure water impure. So, when the mold is broken, the water must be purified. But, unlike my parable, when the human mold is broken and destroyed, the soul which is within it leaves in the same form and development it acquired during life or its captivity."

"So, when the soul is developed and broadened, such as only we can do and returns to earth, it has added strength which it loses only through its own sin and folly. If a human could or would live a life of purity and Godliness, his soul would expand far beyond the clay thing which encompasses it; then would his soul impress everyone he might meet and they would be forced to say: "What a remarkable man—a *good* man." This is not idle optimism as many would lable it; it is *truth* of the most absolute nature."

"It is a beautiful truth;" I said, "And if it could be accomplished would be a triumph of Heaven. But in a world which has as its motto: 'The survival of the fittest,' or the unscrupulous over the honest, it would not succeed. Perhaps the world has swung on its pendulum

from interior to exterior development; but it, in the meantime suffers from want of spirituality."

"And who knows it better than we!" exclaimed our guide, "The pendulum will swing again; but in the meantime, you cannot conceive the struggles we endure, every hour. People who read the 'advanced' thinkers are our greatest burden. I will neither go into details, nor will I name any of these erroneous souls. Only the truly great, and they have been very few, have made any brilliant progress in this region. Nor have the scientists made any great progress on this plane; but the next, the plane of wisdom, is their Heaven. There, even now, you will find men who died years ago, still learning. One has even increased our knowledge."

"Can such a thing be true?" I exclaimed.

"It is true," he replied, "It might not be so surprising, if you consider that he was the best informed man of his time. One can learn much in twenty years."

"I can imagine one can;" I said; "I can imagine this man, delving deeper and deeper in the rich mine of pure knowledge; steadily, for twenty years. That is a long time to search for wisdom, especially after a life filled with study."

"But we have forgotten all about the division of devotion, in discussing devotion. Let us return to the door, for you have seen all this division has to offer in that line," said our guide, putting an end to the conversation.

He continued: "Know you: that every division has not only a motto, which your companion uttered when he entered, but it also has visible symbols of accomplishment. That is: when a sould thoroughly learns and absorbs all the teachings we have to offer, he is advanced to the next division. Upon leaving this division, he is equipped with its symbol, a pair of snow-white sandals. So it is with every division; and as he advances, garment after garment, virtue after virtue is bestowed upon him. When the time comes that he has absorbed every virtue that is taught on this plane, he is clothed in virtue."

"And, too," he continued, "The symbol of each division means admittance into the next and so the full garment means entrance into the third plane."

By this time we had entered the high and narrow valley; and shortly after we reached the wicker gate. Here our guide turned back, leaving us with warm affirmations of friendship. Soon we left the first division and were standing before the second.

There were two stars upon the crest of this gate, but in all other respects it resembled the first. My companion turned to me and said: "The keynote of this division is gladness. Without gladness the world would end life here, would be gray and ungrateful."

Then, turning to the wicker gate, he said: "Gladness enricheth."

When he had so spoken, the door swung open; admitting us to the second division. Very soon after entering, we met a teacher, who greeted us; saying: "Enter into the school of gladness and see what love for gladness really is."

He led us through a canyon; narrow, but with sides not nearly as steep as the one on the first division. We had not gone far before it widened considerably. Soon I saw, on my right, a natural spring; flowing from a cave and dashing down the mountain wall in a laughing waterfall. We followed it down the canyon, where it made little cataracts and rapids; for the valley was rocky if one left the path and the way was constantly descending.

The valley was shaded by giant trees; of such great height, that the lowest branches were at least one hundred feet above the ground. Our companion, seeing my surprised scrutiny, told us that the trees were oaks; and were almost eighteen centuries old. As no plant life ever dies there, but grows and thrives forever, what must be the size of plants that grew ages ago. So I thought; but our guide, knowing my thoughts, shook his head and said: "No plant is allowed to grow for over three thousand years; when it reaches that age, it must be killed and a new one conceived and set in its place."

"But do plants propagate and multiply here?" queried I.

"Nothing propagates here; that is left to the world. We can, however, take the divine spark of life from the Most High; and, taking it, form any manner of life. And we hesitate in taking life; for this is the realm of life, not death."

Interspaced between the giant oakes were what I took to be small trees; but I looked up and saw them to be roses. It was hardly believable; in the world a rose vine was considered large if the stem was two inches thick; but here were rose trees with stems over a foot in thickness! The vines ran from tree to tree and wove a canopy so thick that the eye could not see what was above. Even here, on the under side, the roses were thicker than the stars in the Milky Way. The perfume, as sweet as nectar, permeated the atmosphere.

As much as I wanted to linger in this great grove, the time grew shorter; and my companions were anxious to leave. Unwillingly, we left this spot and journied for perhaps a mile under this ruby canopy. Leaving the trees behind us, we came to a grassy meadow, with little knolls at intervals.

We soon came to a knoll upon which sat a teacher at whose feet were a score of souls. The teacher was a venerable appearing man, one to excite respect. His hair and beard were long and flowing. His eyebrows were long, and shaded his eyes. But his eyes seemed pools of the deepest water, in which were great mysteries. I forced my eyes from his visage and saw that his dress was the customary costume of the Citizens of the City. His only distinguishing mark was a star at the shoulder.

I cannot believe he was really old, for his actions betrayed the vigor of youth. Our guide drew us aside and said in a low tone: "This hallowed soul is a special messenger, sent by the council of the City, to give final teaching to the souls of this division who have learned

the principal points of virtue. When he has instructed them, they are ready to advance to the next division. He is a great man and noble; for he is content to come here and teach these souls, when he might be a member of the council, even the highest council."

"Let us hear what he is saying," requested my companion; so we went over and sat on the grass to listen to his words.

"The secret of gladness on earth, is a wholesome outlook on your present existence and a staunch belief in the life to come. But such gladness is past and behind you. Still, there *may* be a sorrow which overshadows you; an anxiety about those left behind. Let not your heart be troubled in regard to the dear ones; let not your mind wonder: "Why cannot I comfort them in their sorrow?" You may say: "No assurances reach them as to my welfare; I have journied to a country from which no word returns. Each one of you has taken something out of their lives which may never be replaced. Be comforted; we have a visitor here, who will carry back word of your fuller life, to your loved ones."

Thus speaking, he gestured in my direction. I was at once the centre of interest. Many requests and messages were showered upon me. How many strange things I heard! The man said well who said: "The grave covers many secrets."

But they became importunate; and I silenced them with these words: "I will carry a word of hope and consolation to every bereaved human being. Especially you who are past the plane of retribution will be satisfied; for the intuition of your loved ones will tell them that you are safe and happy. Believe in my words; I will not betray you."

"Oh my master;" I said to the hallowed teacher, "Continue your sermon; for it is ennobling."

"Your life here," he continued, "Will be like a musical scale; rising higher and higher, becoming more divine all the while. In time, only the divine music of the

City will equal your development. New happinesses will open to you, with all of Earth's joys and none of its pains. There is happiness in the fulfillment of labor. There is happiness in creation. There is happiness in living. All these happinesses shall you have, and the transcending happiness of communicating with the Universal Spirit."

My companion drew me away from these words, which like divine tonic, filled my spirit. He almost had to force me along, I lingered so—trying to catch more of the joy the teacher radiated.

Soon he was out of sight and hearing. Then I could turn my attention once more, to the valley. The hills were still high, but had lost that jagged grandeur which had so filled me with awe. Green grass covered their summits and slopes, while deep valleys, at intervals, seamed their sides.

The little brook was larger and quieter; it flowed placidly between green banks. Oak trees still appeared, but at intervals; while hemlock and lindens grew in large groves. And all around, in the most unexpected places, the roses bloomed.

Then we came to slightly higher ground, upon which was a tiny village. The white houses were covered with rose vines, loaded with white blossoms. No signs of life disturbed the stillness and the only living thing I saw was a large dog, sleeping in the short street.

I was surprised to see an animal, for I had thought that none, even the most intelligent, possessed a soul. But there he was, serenely curled in the light, with not a trouble; not a flea.

However, he was the only living thing; except the light, winged birds. As we passed through the village, the dog opened one friendly eye, to look at us while the birds flew in circles about our heads.

As we left the village, we heard the piping of a pipe and later, laughter. Such laughter is never heard on earth. Children never laugh in that manner; for the

laugh of a child is empty and unknowing. This laughter was the laughter of people who had met and conquered the woes and tribulations of the world.

Soon they appeared, a score or more. They were making bouquets and wreaths of flowers. Dancing in sheer joy and decorated with wreaths, they reminded me of the legends of the Golden age. Their laughter and shouts welled in the balmy air.

The air was *balmy,* as balmy as a morning in June. Insects; harmless, colorful insects, hummed and buzzed among the flowers. It was a day to make one glad of life—and glad of the lifting of the sorrows and cares of earth.

The path from the village crossed the valley. We followed it closely, crossing the stream by way of a rustic bridge. It was not until we had reached the hills to the right, and had begun to climb, that my companion turned to me and said: "It were best, even for the change, if we leave the school for happiness by way of the mountain road. It is shorter than going by way of the doors."

"It is the same to me," I answered.

"Then here I must leave you," said our guide, "There is little more for me to say that has been left unsaid. The labor, if you would call it labor, is amply rewarded; and the symbol of achieving gladness is the symbol of this division. As beautiful and as joyous as this division may seem to you, it is but a barren sprouting of wisdom. When you see the fulfillment of the toil on these planes and when you see the product of our labor, you will perhaps wonder just how much each division—each teacher had to do with the result. Not much, perhaps, but important. Now I must leave: may you reach the ultimate."

"And may you prosper and get strong in your work;" said my companion.

Our guide turned away and was gone before I could bid him good-bye. I was truly sorry; but my companion, seeing my crestfallen air, took me by the hand. "If you

wish him well," he told me, "He will know and love you."

I was comforted; and putting aside regret, I followed my companion up the mountainside. It was an easy path and we climbed higher and higher. We, in course of time, reached the summit, and paused to look about. I looked down upon the valley from which we had come. What a scene! There it lay, spread before me; with each object visible in the crystalline air. The green was emerald green; the little stream was a thread of silver light, while spots of crimson appeared here and there throughout the length of the entire valley.

Then my companion touched my arm and we started our descent into the valley of the third division. I looked down upon what seemed to be a sea of green. As we descended, the green proved to be evergreen trees. The pungently cleanly odor of these trees reached even to our height.

As we descended, my companion began talking and said to me: "My friend gave us practically all of the truths of his division, but he omitted one item which, though not vitally important, detracts from the completeness of the whole. He spoke of the symbol of the division, but did not say what the symbol was."

"And what is the symbol?" I asked.

"It is a loose undergarment of the purest white," he replied, and was silent for a time. It was not until we had nearly reached the foot of the hill that he broke the silence, saying in a pensive voice: "The school of Justice is a pleasant spot in which to abide. It has always been my favorite; it reminds me of the cedars of Lebanon."

* * *

Soon we reached the foot of the hill and journied along a little path which was covered with a thick carpet of needles. High above us towered the trees. We had not covered a great distance before we came to a clearing. All round, the trees made a circle, broken only by a path

we were on and another, exactly opposite us. In the centre of the clearing stood a teacher, surrounded by students.

He was talking to them; and among his words were these: "Incline your ears and heed my words. True Justice is the greatest mark of Divinity. It is all knowing, unbiased and fixed to the right. Not the earthly right, which is set by the inhabitants of the earth and is variable even as they are variable. It is of the Heavenly right I speak: which is fixed and immovable. Yet Justice is tempered by mercy; but not tempered to the point of weakness. So, in short, justice is composed of full facts, foresight, wisdom and sternness. It is tempered with mercy, love and kindness. These are the elements of Heavenly Justice."

We soon left the clearing and made for the entrance. For quite a time we passed through the forest of evergreens; but in course of time it ended and we came to a clearing. The path was fenced on either side by colossal oaks. These trees bordered the road nearly to the door; even to the narrow valley.

My companion said to me: "The division of Justice is, perhaps, not as important a division as some of the others. Its influence, however, is felt; and its lesson needed to complete the soul for the City. This division has an emblem, as have all the others, this one being a loose robe."

He then stood before the door and said: "Justice broadens."

The door opened and we emerged. While we were approaching the next division, I glanced back and saw the door we had left was crowned by three stars. The door of the fourth division, I saw as we stood before, had four stars. My companion spoke in a loud voice these words: "Purity rewardeth."

The door swinging open, we entered and were met by a teacher. He welcomed us, saying: "This is the school for purity; not the purity of no sin, but the purity

of ideals and purposes. This is a most Godly attribute, but purity alone is not sufficient. The teachings of the other divisions must be added to perfect a soul in morality. Come and follow me."

We followed him through myriads of pure white lillies, which filled the valley from side to side. They resembled a snowy blanket, with a silver thread making a serpentine path through the centre. This was a tiny stream which glinted in the midst of the flowers.

In the far distance appeared a clump of trees, which were covered with white blossoms. As we approached by means of a little path, which followed the bank of the stream, more clumps and groves of trees appeared; until, I could see clump after clump dotting the landscape, far and near in the valley.

We soon came to the first clump I had noticed; and passing through the outer circle of trees, came to a grassy knoll. From the summit of this knoll grew a wide spreading magnolia tree; so great that it over-shadowed all the other trees in the clump. It was in blossom; and you cannot imagine the beauty and purity of the sight.

Beneath this tree, upon the knoll, stood a teacher. He was talking to a circle of souls who sat at the foot of the knoll. We lingered awhile and heard the following: "Purity of heart means not only the absence of carnal passion, but it includes true piety. *True* piety is in every sense a turning from the wrong to right. It includes clearness of purpose, which is given from without; love of the Most High, and man: which comes from within; and a yearning to develop, which is stimulated by a combination of things without and within. These things create pure ambition, which may be a yearning to help some worthy person, not with any hope for reward or even thanks, for the service rendered. Pure objectives are also required; for a human being must have some ideal to set his hopes. Such is true piety; such, with something added, is true holiness."

"Come," said my companion after a time; "Let us

depart. You now understand that purity and piety go hand in hand. He who is pure of heart, is in communion with God. He sees Him in the sky; in the sea, everywhere. He who is pure in heart—has the clear sight of the things which are right. It is only when the pungent odor of sin reaches him, that he loses this gift; which he had from birth. It is far better, many authorities to the contrary, never to come near sin, than to try and overcome sin. Fly from it as you would the plague; for bodily diseases only tear the body; but sin tears the soul."

"So much for the fourth division," he continued; "Let us return and continue our journey. When the soul leaves this division, it is vested with a snowy-white robe. This goes over the robe acquired in the third division."

By this time we had reached the door; then bidding farewell to our guide, we emerged; and stood before the fifth division. Upon the top of this door were five stars of silver: one for each virtue acquired in each division.

"The virtue gained in this division," said my companion, "Is purpose. Let us enter and behold how purpose is instilled into the soul."

Here he said in a loud voice: "Purpose guideth."

The door opening, we entered and were met by a teacher, who said: "The attribute acquired in this division is the power of purpose. That is: we instil into the souls the determination to reach a great goal to which we point. You have probably gotten some intimation of the goal to which we all strive. The effort is worth all the grief and utter discouragement endured on the road. But come and observe how we instil purpose into the souls. Follow me."

He led the way over a trail cut in the side of the hill. The floor of the canyon was narrow and rocky, over which tumbled a turbulent mountain stream. From the hill above us, even to the bottom of the hill, grew crawling vines which made a natural, green passageway. Soon the floor of the canyon grew less steep and gradually the stream broadened into a natural lake.

The path was still in the side of the hill, but not very far above the surface of the water. As we travelled along, the teacher continued his lecture. He said: "You know, some souls come to this plane with the belief that they can at once enter into brothership with the Great Dead, without preparation. They are soon informed to the contrary, with a different effect upon the different souls. Some enter into the work cheerfully and zealously, others grow discouraged. Some even refuse to listen to the teachings we have to offer and refuse to learn anything."

"That," he continued, "Is the reason this division is in existence. This is the halfway mark of the journey to the City, and many weary of the toil. This is a place of spiritual refreshment and encouragement. Some souls are even sent here from the first plane, leaving here to go to the first division of this plane."

By this time we had come to a peninsula which jutted out, a little lower than the path, into the lake. This neck of land was not large, for all it contained was a huge banyan tree. This, however, covered the entire island, some of the limbs trailing in the lake.

Beneath this tree sat a teacher, around whom, on different roots, sat pupils. We stayed to hear him say to them: "Purpose is the secret of every great work. With right purpose one can accomplish anything, regardless of obstacles. This for which you are striving, is the greatest object anyone could ever hope to reach. Yet it is not difficult to accomplish. If you can acquire virtues here as easily as you acquired faults on earth, it will be child's play. The plane above this will teach you the command of objects, material and spiritual. The fourth plane is a place of spiritual preparation for the City. You must cast off all ties that bind you to the earth and exert your desires in an earnest effort to reach the goal which we are helping you to attain: the Heavenly City."

He continued: "Perfect peace, love and accomplishing, reign there. It is the goal; and a purpose for which to

strive. The obstacles are not as troublesome as they seem. But a combination of desires and effort is needed to reach the goal; and I know you will be successful."

I was profoundly impressed by that lecture. It was convincing and inspiring. But we could not stay long and soon left; our guide leading the way.

We passed, at intervals, peninsulas and islands on which were scholars and teachers. Soon we reached the end of the lake, where the little stream continued. We crossed by way of a natural bridge. Beneath us, as we crossed, the little stream made a lovely waterfall.

On the other side, we continued our circumnavigating and it was not long before we had again returned to the head of the lake. We then retraced our steps to the door of the division.

Taking leave of our guide, we left and soon stood before the door of the sixth division. I have neglected to mention, that the symbol of the fifth division, is a girdle, fastened by a silver star.

The door of the sixth division was crowned by a row of six stars. My companion said as we stood before the door: "Love fulfilleth."

The door opened and we entered. A teacher met us and taking us by the hand, said: "This is the last division of the second plane. Here love is taught, the culmination of all the teaching of this plane of love. Before this, love for specific virtues has been taught. Here the soul is taught to love for the pure joy of loving. Come this way."

We followed him through the valley, which gradually broadened into a plain. The further we progressed, the more wonderful became the scenery. The hills were of bare rock and of the most delicate tints and colors. Red seemed to predominate.

However, as rocky as were the hills, the plain was level and fertile. There was no stream, that I could see, but willows and sycamores signified the presence of water.

We had travelled quite a distance and had stopped frequently to admire the beauty of the scenery, when I glanced down and noticed a peculiar flower. I plucked it and saw the most peculiar growing thing I had ever seen. It had seven petals, set in a circle nearest the stem, which were orange. Upon these petals and of the same size, were six of an emerald green. Then upon these, but much smaller, were three petals of a violet color. The centre of the flower, where these petals joined, was raised quite a degree above them and was a silver white.

It was a strange blossom; and as I viewed it, not from the viewpoint of a botanist, it struck me as being very prophetic and significant.

I was aroused from my meditation by the sound of a bell. I had never before heard such a mellow, liquid note from any bell. The vibration throbbed everywhere; it seemed as though the air and ground were rung as a bell. The sound slowly died away, making the stillness more apparent.

Then it occured to me that I knew nothing of the bell, but if I asked, I might learn. I turned to my companion, so I might ask, but saw that he was intensely concentrated upon a ring which he wore upon his finger. At that moment, a voice spoke out of the air and said slowly, in solemn tones, these words: "The citizen of the City is thrice blessed; he is little lower than the angels."

When the voice had ceased, my companion raised his head and roused himself from his thoughts. He smiled at my questioning look and said in explanation: "Once in every twenty four hours, all the Citizens of the City go into communion with the spirit of the Most High. It lifts us to further endeavors. The work of the teacher is not easy, especially those of the first plane. They are not thanked by the ones they help. With the teachers on the other planes, the condition is, naturally, better. Yet the spiritual strain is great and must be relieved.

This communion with the Most High does that and gives fresh strength."

"And what does your ring signify?" I asked.

"The ring?" he replied, "It is our badge of citizenship. Observe it closely: the centre is raised in the shape of a pyramid. In the centre of which is a perfect diamond. Around the pyramid is a ring of white, then a ring of violet, then of green, then orange. Around all is a band of gold. This ring is bestowed upon all who enter the city."

"It must have a symbolical meaning," said I, "What is it?"

"The centre is the City; it is built like a pyramid, strong and everlasting. Like the pyramid in the ring, the City is precious. The diamond in the centre signifies the truths which are interwoven in every part of the City. As around the pyramid is a ring of white, so around the City is the fourth plane; white being the symbol of soul power. As around the ring of white is a ring of violet, so the third plane, the plane of wisdom, is without the fourth plane; violet being the color of regal wisdom. So the second plane is without the third and the first without the second. Green being symbolical of morality and orange of lack of sin. As around the whole ring is a band of gold, so the rule and power of the righteous bind the planes and City in one empire, an Empire of righteousness."

We went farther up the valley, until we came to a wide, smooth lawn; upon which sat numbers of souls, listening to a teacher. He said: "Observe the soul plane. The earth is the lowest habitation for man. It is a place to test his worth. It tests a man's worth harshly! If the earth did not do so, no soul would ever enter a body. Man, as he now exists, is the highest phase possible for the time. God created man out of the dust, or the lowest life, of the earth. As the bodies improved, so the spirits improved; until when the bodies became reasoning beings, the souls became responsible for the actions of the bodies.

when the planes were constructed as they exist to-day, the souls found a means beside their own effects in attaining the ultimate."

He continued: "Many had reached the ultimate by their own lives in the flesh. Considering the difficulty of the feat, it is surprising that *any* achieved that end. Let me define the requisites of each step of heaven. The ultimate speaks for itself: it is a one-ness with the Universal Spirit, or God; complete in spirit and merged—a part of the universe. The next lowest step is spiritual completeness, but still an individual soul, potentially great but still a self-ruled being. The third degree is still less glorified; but complete in knowledge of the universe and exalted in the near presence of God. The fourth is the lowest. The soul there is sinless, imbued with the great moral truths and developed spiritually as far as the labor of others can accomplish."

"These are the four degrees of the inhabitants of the City. The rule, to return to my subject," he continued, "Of both the Planes and the City, is love. These are the things you must love: the First Plane, for it purges sin; the Second Plane, for it gives truth and love; the third Plane, for it gives wisdom; the Fourth Plane, for it lights the white flame of spirituality. Love the City, for it is your home; love the All-Highest, for He gave you life. Love for the Christ and the council, for they created the Planes. Love all other souls, for they are your brothers. Love they who persecute you, for they develop your soul. Love the ones who love you, for they develop their own soul. Love everything in the Universe except the pitiful ones, and them pity."

Such was the teaching of Jesus, but it seems to have been discarded. If man had believed in it, and ruled his life by it, most of the grief, poverty, heartaches and sin would not be; it is not possible. Yet people are apt to choose the easiest way and most do choose it. It is easier to be indifferent than to love.

Slowly we retraced our steps, in silence and soon emerged from the sixth division. My companion then led the way to a large gate. Upon entering, we found ourselves in a narrow, room-like canyon. In the centre of the canyon was an altar-like object.

Our guide pointed to it and said: "This is the place from which souls go to the third plane. However, as the souls are not shed in the transition, they are transported with the speed of light from one place to another.

"This is the end of the second plane," he continued. "In a fortnight you will come again and view the third plane. Farewell, then, until we meet again."

"Farewell," I replied.

He imprinted a kiss upon my brow. Then my sight grew dim and my senses reeled. I lost consciousness, for quite a time. The next thing I knew, I was lying upon my bed and the day had commenced.

This, then, is the record of my travels on the second plane.

END OF THE TRIP TO THE SECOND PLANE

THE THIRD PLANE.

A fortnight after my visit to the second plane, I fell asleep and was carried, in the spirit, to the third plane. With the swiftness of light was I carried. And when the veil was lifted which sleep had cast upon me, I was standing upon a broad plain. Neither walls nor hills obstructed my view and only a few trees could be seen.

After I had turned around to see these things, my companion stood beside me. He informed me of his presence by saying: "This is the third, the plane of wisdom. It is my home. Therefore we need not be dependent upon a third person to lead us and describe. I know this plane as a pilot knows his harbor—and that is well. This is an interesting region and contains many things which will be incomprehensible to you, tied to earth as you are. Come with me and I will lead you."

We were standing upon a very small island, which was hardly ten feet across. As he finished speaking, a narrow causeway appeared, which connected our island with the nearby shore. As we passed over this bridge, my companion said to me: "Here we have none of the hindrances encountered on the earth. We are all one family; large and scattered over a vast expanse, but connected by mutual education and affection. Here are learned the basic laws of matter and energy. I promise you they will be interesting."

We were hemmed in on both sides by crystal water; deep, but so clear that I could see the rainbow-like plant life in the depths. Yet no living creature but the plants inhabited the depths; no fish, bivalve or carnivorous ceature spent an ideal existence there. But the natural beauty, although it held me, did not slacken our pace; and

we were soon on the mainland, leaving all the beauty behind.

I looked up and saw that we were standing before a great chair. Upon the chair rested a cloud, larger than any I had seen on the two preceeding planes; but unlike them, inasmuch as light seemed to be within and shine through its darkness. Then a voice spoke to me and said: "This is the plane of wisdom; and it is time for you to explore its wonders and mysteries. More is known here than the earth-dwellers will know—even though a thousand centuries should pass away. Yet the basic law is but one, and the branches two; out of which, intertwined and relevant, spring all the laws of the universe. Yet the basic law you must not name; for there is no language upon the earth that can give it a name. But the two branches are known and recognized. These and their co-relation you may name and describe. You are forbidden to describe the rules for commanding energy and the method of creation. These are forbidden; we will guide you in the others. Now go."

As the voice ceased, I bowed down before the chair and departed. We crossed a little stream, which joined the main body of water a little below the chair, by way of a little amber bridge. My companion said, upon my remarking that amber was a peculiar substance with which to build a bridge, that every material was available; and the kind of amber they use, is not brittle, but resiliant and strong."

The little bridge delighted me. As we crossed, the light was reflected from the water and shone through the bridge, resulting in a most peculiar and pleasing tint; for the light that shone through the water was not white, but violet. The resulting tint was, as near as I can judge, ochre.

Crossing the bridge, we came to the first class. Each class on the first two divisions is on a separate island; each island being connected by a little bridge. The third division is much further inland and in hilly country.

The class we first saw, was congregated in a marble stadium. In shape, it resembled a Grecian Ampitheatre. The seats, arranged in tiers around the centre, were of marble, as was the centre of the stadium. There the teacher stood and was talking to the students when we arrived. He had just begun and I was fortunate in hearing his whole lecture.

He said: "Force is the first great unit of the Universe. It is the power that binds all things together. Were it not for force, the Universe would be scattered. Of what would it consist? Down as minutely as you can go, the smallest particle is held together by force. Each particle is composed of still smaller particles and so on, ad finetum. If force were to be destroyed, everything would be without form, and void. There would not be any such thing as matter and a world would be—nothing.

"Force," he continued, "Produces electricity, heat or any motion. Force holds the worlds together and forces them to whirl in their accustomed orbits. Take your own solar system as an example: power in the form of gravitation holds it together, while power in the form of momentum causes the planets to revolve. Gravitation, electricity, heat, light and sound are all related; they are all power. And what is power? And what connects power and matter? I will tell you, for you must learn: it is the primal law of the universe."

Here he gave the law. It seemed like simple language; but I could neither understand, nor could I put it into words if I had. Yet if I *had* understood, I would never have written it here, because of the commandments I have received.

The teacher continued: "Force, under this law, always travels forward, in an absolutely straight line and continues to do so, unless halted or diverted by a more powerful force. The effect of force is in direct ratio of one particle acting upon another. Force alone can effect force. Friction of a collision between moving force of one hand and inert force acting in an opposite

direction. The result is either the stopping of the former or the carrying along of the latter. All matter contains inert force and is only moved when it comes into contact with greater moving force."

This is the pith of his lecture. Everything is compelled by force; without which, the universe would be chaos—dead. The wondrous thing, the thing which is a great problem is: how did the great machine, the Universe, get its first propulsion? Has all the energy existed forever, which is immeasurable; or did some great, prevading power in the Universe give it its initial start? Both alternatives are inconceivable; but one must be right. Unless the prevading force *is* the energy of the Universe and so has existed forever; neither faltering nor stopping.

From this place we went to the second division, by way of another little amber bridge; the stream being about twice the width of the former. All the way past the bridge, along the road, were vast cedar trees. The needles made a thick, crisp carpet. Their pungent odor filled the air. The trees seemed to whisper sweet messages between themselves; which my earthly ear could not translate.

"Peace, happiness and solitude are the greatest aides to learning;" said my companion. "Here are all these, and more."

Suddenly we came to an ampitheatre of wondrous beauty. It was sunk in the ground, so that the branches of the evergreens formed a canopy above it. The ampitheatre was composed of pinkish mother-of-pearl, of wondrous beauty. The seats, set in tiers around the centre, were of ebony; and steps, in each quarter, reached from the top to the bottom. The centre was separated from the seats by a narrow, low railing of jasper; on which were set precious stones of a milky white. These stones resemble pearls; but could not be, for they were a foot in diameter.

A teacher was addressing a class. As I approached, I heard these words: "Force and matter are so closely bound together, that an attempt to separate them would be futile. Imagine Force without Matter; you cannot. For force requires matter for it to function. Neither could you imagine matter without force; it is equally impossible. Matter, as you have learned, is composed of an uncountable number of small particles. These particles, in turn, are composed of yet smaller particles. There is no more an end to their minuteness, than there is an end to the Universe."

He then proceeded to explain how the "elements," one hundred in all, are composed of a much smaller number of gases of different weights. He gave them names and the proportions of each in each element. It is in the control of those gases, he explained, that souls control the natural forces, The names of the gases I have witheld, for I believe they will not be of much interest to anyone but scientists. I might add, that in ordinary cases, they combine to form a solid; but on application of heat, they turn again into gas; not, however, breaking into elementary form.

We soon left the division; and journeying through a forest of hemlock trees, came to another stream. We crossed by way of an amber bridge. The wavelets seemed to whisper low songs which were almost speech; but alas, I could not understand!

Leaving the stream, we came to land which rose in little hills. The path wound around, gradually climbing higher and higher, until the scenery became mountainous. Then, at intervals, we crossed chasms by way of amber bridges. After we had journied for quite a time, we came to a gigantic chasm, the bottom of which was invisible. I estimated the distance across to be at least five hundred feet.

Across this awful gulf was a narrow, amber bridge. As we crossed, a noise like the rushing of wind filled the great depths, until I was afraid.

My companion, sensing my fear, turned and asked in a low voice: "Fear you *God*?"

We had not gone far, after crossing the bridge, before we came to a great temple, carved out of the solid rock of the hill. Great noises issued from its wide door and flashes of light.

"Come, he said, "Let us enter."

I followed him with trepidation; but we soon were safely inside. A great central chamber, capped by a lofty dome: were my first impressions of the edifice. Large columns supported the roof and giant crags, pinnicles and ledges gave an appearance of wild, unsmoothed strength to the room. Several doors opened on all four sides of the main chamber.

We entered the one to the left, which led into a perfectly dark room. Presently the gloom was lighted by a very faint, spectral glow; but not strong enough for me to distinguish any object clearly. Then the range of light so brightened, that it seemed to collect and amalgamate. I had the impression of standing on the rear platform of a train which was passing through a tunnel.

The light so concentrated and brightened, that I could scarcely gaze upon it without flinching. But the color soon changed to a yellow, then to a cherry and finally disappeared altogether. Then, from the ceiling a light was thrown upon it and we approached to look upon it more closely. The matter was in the form of a globe but entirely molten, with but patches of solid upon its surface.

Finally the entire surface was solid, with but tiny holes showing the molten interior. Then a dense gas, which had been driven off by the heat, settled and covered the surface with a silver coating. Only the holes through which the fire shone, were uncovered.

Presently the coating was broken by little wrinkles. Again and again the wrinkles appeared, only to be slowly dissolved by the gas. But the wrinkles appeared faster than the water dissolved them; until, finally a small portion of the globe was covered with brown. In a very

short while, the brown spots were covered with green. As my companion left at this time, I also was forced to leave. As he offered no explanation of the thing I had seen, so I give none.

We entered the door to our right, which was before us when we entered the building and were in a spacious room. It was well lighted and well arranged. The three walls we saw were shelves, on which were phials and bottles. Some seemed to be empty, while others contained liquids of different colors.

On either side of the door, arranged in tiers, were seats for the students; while in the centre of the room was a large table. In the centre of the table was a crystal dome, which was about six feet square. There was a door in the further side, and holes at regular intervals, about one inch in diameter, in the door.

There was no class in session at the time; but the teacher in charge, upon request by my companion, agreed to demonstrate some of their experiments.

While lifting two bottles down from the shelf, he said: "Here are two elements, which combined, will make lead. And," he continued, taking another bottle, "This element, added to the other two, will make gold. As they are heavy gases, I cannot place them upright in order to empty them from their containers." Then he took three tripods; and, opening the door of the case, set them directly opposite the three holes in the door. Then he took the bottles and fastened a metal top over the openings as he took off their ordinary lids. He then set them upside down on the tripods; and fastening long rods in the holes that were in the sides of the lids, put the rods through the holes in the door and closed the door.

He said: "Watch closely." Then he pulled on the three rods, one at a time. Slowly, an almost liquid-like substance curled out of the three jars and descended to the floor of the case. Then he pushed on the rods, closing the lids.

Meanwhile, the gases had been spreading on the floor of the case and merging. Where two joined, lead appeared; but where three joined, there was gold. The three gases seemed to have an affiliation for each other, for in no great length of time a sheet of gold was on the floor of the case. We handled it and it was pure gold.

This was but one of the many experiments he performed for us, but it will be a good illustration of their accomplishment. We soon pased on to the third room, however, leaving these wonders behind us.

Here, students were practicing force alone. As this was a dangerous place to enter, we did not do so; but watched from the entrance. All I could see were flashes of light. The noise was terrific.

So we soon emerged from the rock-hewn temple and continued on our way. My companion presently said: "The night is only a little more than half over. So if it is agreeable to you, we will visit the fourth plane."

I said it would be agreeable to me, so we went on our way to the fourth plane.

Soon a high mountain wall appeared before us and my companion said: "This is the end of the third division of the third plane and before us is the way to the fourth plane. Let us hasten." So we hurried to the mountain.

END OF THE THIRD PLANE.

Chapter V

THE FOURTH PLANE

After we had left the last division of the third plane, we went into a large cave; the interior of which was perfectly dark. After walking for some time, my guide, who was before me, stopped; and grasped my arm.

"Clamber up and lie down," said he.

As it was, I could see nothing; so I was guided alone by his hand. I climbed upon a shelf-like niche, which was cut in the wall. I lay down and composed myself.

"Fare thee well," he said, "I will return again."

Sleep overcame me and I must have lain quite a time in complete unconciousness. Then, suddenly, a current like an electric thrill shot through me, banishing all sleep.

Then I heard, first far off, then closer, the most beautiful music. Softly and sweetly it was wafted to me through the Stygian darkness. It thrilled me as I lay there, so that my spirit trembled to hear.

This music—or was it music? followed me throughout the trip. No—even further; for it *will* follow me, like a lost melody, all my days. When I am on my death bed, I hope to hear such strains from some heavenly source.

From out of the darkness came a light like a milky mist. It concentrated and brightened, until it enveloped me in its silver glory. Then I beheld the companion of my other travels, walking toward me down a long corridor. He was smiling.

He took my hand and bade me arise. "My friend," said he, "You are now on the fourth plane. It is not large, but very interesting. Follow me."

I followed him through a long hallway, which was seemingly endless. The floor was crystal, as clear as

ice; the ceiling was also crystal, through which the light seemed to shine. Upon the two side walls were painted endless scenes, all connected. The subject varied from mountain to marsh land, on the wall to the left; on the right were sea scapes. Neither gave one a sensation of monotony. Below these paintings, the wall was a beautiful, variegated onyx; the whole giving a remarkably artistic effect.

At length we came to a wide portal, which spanned the hallway. Passing beneath this, we came to a large room. "Friend," said my guide, "We are now in the ante-chamber of the fourth plane. Proceed carefully and enter respectfully; for this is holy ground."

Dear reader, can the words of earth describe Heaven, or that which Heaven contains? Can it even describe the threshold of Heaven? For the Fourth Plane is really the threshold of Heaven. Words have been created to describe the things of earth and to aid people in communicating wishes. Few words exist without some equivalent on earth. Some few describe the hopes of men in a life to come, but very few. So there I stood, with mind aghast, with divine splendors before my eyes.

When we say holy or sublime—when we use *any* of the superlatives, we speak of the highest and best according to our aesthetic sense. Even in beauty, we speak of the nearest to perfection our minds can conceive. Perfection is impossible to describe, for it is the highest and most complete. Therefore, in all that is to follow, the ultimate in perfection may be taken for granted; if you do, it will make my task much easier.

* * *

All the vast room was overwhelmed in a blaze of white glory, just tinged with gold. Yet the splendor did not blind me; it did not clash upon my vision.

In the centre of the room was a great chair composed of diamond; through which the light broke into myriads of pale blue, green, red and yellow flashes. Upon this chair rested a great cloud, out of which came a soft voice.

It said to me: "I am, and was and will be. I saw the light of truth, amid the sufferings of my people; I pitied them. I gave them the light and suffered with them. I saw them misled into error and gave them light. They heard me—hear *you* me; for I who see the light would have you see the light also."

"Ages ago, the germ of life came to your world; it had a soul. It flourished and prospered and its descendants had souls. Through the ages, even as life flourished and multiplied, so the souls passed on. From stage to stage they passed progressing with the bodies. So the soul climbs higher and higher by cycles. We, on this plane, strengthen the soul that is tattered and riven by sin. We make it whole. Enter then, and tell the earth that the soul is made whole by its own labor and not otherwise. Proceed; and I, who have been ages dead, greet you, my brother."

Respectfully bowing before the chair, my companion and I left the room. Emerging, we stood upon a broad plain. Beginning at the door and stretching into the distance, was a broad road. In the far distance, like an Aurora Borealis, gleamed a beautious light. Red, blue, violet, green and other bright colors were commingled in a splendid array. Through these and entwining the whole distant vista, were golden shafts of light. These I have mentioned, were the only lights I saw, except those that were behind us.

We proceeded along this dark road for quite a time, greatly wondering at the beauty of the illumination. After a while, it was blotted from the sky, leaving us in total darkness. Yet we kept on, trusting in our Keeper, until we came to a large edifice. We stood before the gate, which was semi-luminous in the darkness and knocked with a silver knocker, upon the door. Then, slowly, the doors opened inwardly; letting light shine upon us from its first movement.

When the heavy doors had swung inwardly to their fullest extent, we stepped beneath the lofty portals. We

were in a wide hallway, which increased in height until it joined the central auditorium. All was suffused in an overpoweringly divine light. It was slightly golden in color and looked more like sunlight than any other light I had before seen on my travels.

The hallway through which we had entered, was arched in the Gothic fashion and was supported by small columns of black marble. The rotunda which capped the auditorium, was divided into twelve sectors, alternately black and white marble. At the jointure of each sector with another, was a large column, of black marble. The walls of both the hallway and the auditorium were of white marble, pierced at intervals by doors. The floor was of the clearest crystal.

A teacher with a blazing star upon his shoulder and carrying a light wand of silver, approached and greeted us courteously. He explained that he was instructed to show us the few remarkable features of the fourth plane. Also, that it was not only a duty, but a pleasure for him to do so for our enlightenment. He also said that he was the head teacher of the building; hence the silver wand.

Motioning us to follow, he went to one of the doors and entered, we following. We entered a classroom; or as he said: "Chamber of light." It was a large room, with three sides marble and the fourth crystal. This side, which was opposite us when we entered, was as he said, facing the City.

To our right, was the only piece of furniture the room possessed: a thing of ebony which resembled a pulpit. I was told that the students sit in a circle before this, while being taught.

With such a view of their goal and such instructors, it is little wonder that the pupils are quickly taught soul development. This teaching completes the instructions given upon the other planes. It might be called: "The severing of the last link which binds to earth."

From here, the soul steps into that blessed region; which repays, manifoldly, all the bluffetings and tor-

tures of a hard, cold world. All the gloomy and base things of life are left behind; and the soul steps into a new, sinless and productive existence. Then, step by step, higher and higher, the aesthetic soul advances, until it is lost and enfolded in the mighty presence of the pervading spirit of all creation: God.

With these pitiful murmurings, I end the story of my travels "Without the City." Sometime, if I can, I will tell of the beauties "Within the City," and the way thereto. Of the frail, rainbow-like bridge which spans the dark river. That river which separated the City from the Planes, over which nothing which has the grossness of flesh, may pass. Of the people of the City and the lights. Of other things too; that might be too high and sublime to put into words.

Until that time comes, may this book have the mission of comfort and hope for which it was designed by my Masters. And may the peace of those things which are higher—descend upon you, until *you* acquire peace. The peace which surpasses all understanding forever; in this world, through which we now journey and the other world—to which our hopes and souls are extending.

SELAH

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
00014778366